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BIHAR AND ORISSA

DURING THE FALL OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

I.

Scope of this historical study—Sources discussed —Ghulam Husain, the Patna historian, his life— Lessons of History for to-day.

Scope of these Lectures.

I propose to study in these lectures the history of the North-Eastern Province of the Mughal Empire, namely Bihar, Bengal and Orissa, during the fall of that empire in the middle of the 18th century. Geography and history alike have created an organic connection among these three provincial divisions. Orissa was, at its first acquisition by Akbar, naturally attached to Bengal, and though in the 17th century it often had a separate *subahdar* of its own, it was at the end of that century incorporated with Bengal for all purposes of civil and military administration. To these two, Bihar was added in 1733,* and thus one compact *subah* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was formed, which maintained its entity for nearly two hundred years down to our own days.

* A Persian ms. named *Ahwal-i-Mahabat Jang* (Salar Jang Library, Haidarabad), an anonymous work (? by Yusuf Ali Khan), says that the *subahdari* of Bihar was conferred on Shuja Kh. in the 15th year of Muhammad Shah's reign (which began in 1733). *Siyar* gives no date, but from it the year can be inferred as shortly after 1730. It is admitted that Siraj-uddaulah was born just when Shuja Kh. made Alivardi his deputy at Patna, *i.e.*, in 1733-34.

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In tracing the history of Bihar and Orissa during the period embraced in these lectures, it will be impossible to exclude the affairs of Bengal altogether, because, as I have said, these three provinces together formed one political unit with one capital and centre of public life, and what affected one province was bound to influence the other two provinces also. Their affairs, therefore, cannot be always or usefully disentangled and placed in three water-tight compartments by the historian. It should also be borne in mind that very often when old histories or records speak of Bengal they do not mean Bengal proper, but the composite political body of which Bengal was merely the most prominent member. The reference in many such cases is to Bihar, though the word actually used is Bengal, as being more familiar to the outside world.

Again, a foreign irruption, such as that of the Marathas, into one of these provinces could not be isolated and confined to that province only; it rapidly and naturally passed into the other two provinces as well. An internal disorder at Patna had immediate repercussion on the peaceful life of Murshidabad or Katak. Therefore, for the purposes of history, all general affairs of these three provinces have to be surveyed together. I have lightened my task by omitting from my survey all minor and purely local matters, which did not influence the general situation nor affect the Government of these *subahs* as a whole. Hence, warfare and diplomacy will be the subject-matter of this special study, with only such internal affairs as had a provincial importance.

From this point of view, the period of the fall of the Mughal Empire in these provinces is domi-

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nated by two main facts,—the Maratha raids and the British conquest. The latter subject has been studied exhaustively and on the basis of a wealth of authentic sources by many previous writers, and therefore it will not be touched by me here. On the other hand, the Maratha invasions and the internal commotions that resulted from them have been hitherto known only vaguely and with few and often confused details. Even the exact dates of important events, were either unknown or had been wrongly given and accepted without suspicion.

Original sources of information

It is now possible to reconstruct the story of the Maratha raids and the connected events in these provinces in full detail and with absolute precision of dates and locality. Hitherto writers on the subject have depended solely on the inaccurate English translation of *Siyar-ul-mutakhkharin* by a French convert to Islam and Gladwin's imperfect version of Salimullah's *Tarikh-i-Bangala,* besides the Bengali poem *Maharashtra-Puran* which stops as early as 31st March, 1744, and the few English factory records available in print, or the grossly erroneous and primitive histories of Orme and Scrafton.

European factory records.

But to-day the historian of this period has at his disposal the original contemporary records which throw authentic light on the subject from many angles. These are in many languages.

In English we have—

1. English factory records, consisting of

   (*a*) Letters from Bengal to the Directors of the Company in England.

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(*b*) Consultations of the Calcutta Council and, later, Proceedings of the various Committees.

(*c*) Calendar of Persian correspondence, from 1759 onwards.

Transcripts of (*a*) have been secured from the India Office, London, for the Imperial Record Office in Calcutta. As for (*b*) most of the old records in Calcutta were destroyed or damaged at Sirajuddaulah's capture of that city in 1756. What has survived is preserved in manuscript in the Imperial Record Office, and I have extracted everything relevant to the subject from it. This series practically ends with 1750, as only a few sheets of later volumes have survived. Some extracts from (*a*) and (*b*) are given in Long's *Selections from Unpublished Records of Government 1748-1767*, Vol. I (1869).

2. The French records so far printed contain:—

(*a*) Correspondance du Conseil de Chandernagor avec divers, 525 pages ending with 10 February, 1757.

(*b*) Correspondance du Conseil Superieur de Pondichery avec le Conceil de Chandernagor, tome II (1738-1747), tome III (1747-1757).

(*c*) Correspondance du Conseil Superieur de Pondichery et de la Compagnie, tome III (1739-1742), tome IV (1744-1749).

This last gives useful summaries of letters received from Chandernagor, the originals of which are no longer in Pondichery.

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Contemporary vernacular works

3. The only valuable source in the Marathi language is *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, Part 20, "The Bhonsles of Nagpur." The State-papers of this dynasty have disappeared. Naturally, the despatches to the Nagpur Court and letters from it to its officers and to other Powers in India would not find their way to the record office of the Peshwas. So, the Poona archives have merely yielded reports from the Peshwas' agents and correspondents at Nagpur and Murshidabad which throw valuable light on the subject and enable us to correct some prevailing errors. The most disappointing works in this language are the only two professed old histories, namely *Nagpurkar Bhonslyanchi Bakhar*, ed. by V. D. Oak (1885) and *Nagpurkar Bhonsalyanchya Sambandhache Kagadpatra*, ed. by V. D. Oak (1889). The former was written by Kashirao Rajeshwar Gupte in 1822 at the request of Mr. R. Jenkins, and is a mere gossipy traditional work.

4. The Bengali eye-witnesses of the Maratha ravages have left two short works, (*a*) a poem in Bengali named the *Maharashtra Puran*, written by Gangaram, the surviving ms. of which was copied in December, 1751, and (*b*) a short Sanskrit work named *Chitra-champu*, written by Vaneshwar Vidyalankar, in November, 1744, which merely describes the sufferings of the invaded people and the journey of a party of fugitives to an asylum on an island. They touch only the fringe of the subject and are of little use for the narrative, though the first-named work gives two valuable dates and both of them describe the atmosphere accurately.

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Persian authorities

5. In Persian, we have

(*a*) News-letters (*Akhbarat*) of the Court of Delhi, covering 36 days in April and May, 1743. The ms. is in the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris (No. 613,Suppl. 313), and I have published an English translation of it in *J.B.O. R.S.*, December, 1931. It is invaluable for dates and accurate details within its short compass.

(*b*) *Siyar-ul-mutakhkharin.* This is the most important and detailed history of these eastern provinces. The author was a native of Patna and intimately related to the high officers of the Muslim Government, and he personally took part in four of the compaigns in this province during this period. He was a man of superior education and mental powers and a historian of outstanding merit. In respect of accurate and detailed information his work is unapproached by any other Persian history of the time. The author is perfectly candid, he tells us that such an incident took place either towards the close of this month or at the beginning of the next month. Therefore, his book is extremely valuable to one who has the means of checking and correcting his statements and dates from other sources. As illustrations of the corrections of his dates that I have made I may mention (*i*) the treaty between Alivardi and Raghuji in 1751, (*ii*) the period of captivity of Rajah Durlabhram, the deputy governor of Orissa, in the hands of the Marathas, (*iii*) the first plunder of Murshidabad, and (*iv*) Alivardi's return to Murshidabad from the Orissa campaign of 1749.

Two other histories were written in these provinces in the Persian language about this time,

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namely (*c*) *Tarikh-i-Bangala* by Salimullah, written by order of Henry Vansittart, Governor of Bengal from 1760 to 1764, and translated incompletely and incorrectly by Francis Gladwin under the title of *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal* (1788), and (*d*) *Riyaz-us-Salatin,* written by Ghulam Husain Salim of Malda, at the request of Mr. George Udny, whose munshi he was, in 1786-87. This last work has no independent value, as it is a mere compilation written in an obscure corner of Bengal by a man who was not a great traveller like the author of *Siyar*. Moreover, *Riyaz* has incorporated the earlier account of Salimullah with only a few changes.

The English versions of *Siyar* and Salimullah are very unreliable, having been produced in the infancy of Oriental studies in India, and by translators who had no means of checking their authors' or their own mistakes by reference to maps and other works of reference. Mustafa, the translator of *Siyar,* was, besides, a very careless worker with an inadequate knowledge of English and Persian alike. I have, therefore, throughout these lectures consulted the original Persian texts of both these works.

Orme, Scrafton, Holwell and other English writers of the time, who have touched the events described in this work, have made gross mistakes, through their lack of knowledge of original sources. Orme, for example, turns the Qanauji Brahman Kavi-kalash into Cablis Khan, and gives Alivardi only one daughter, instead of three.

There are many other contemporary histories and memoirs on the fall of the Mughal Empire, written in Persian. But they were all composed

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by persons living far away from Bengal and Bihar and therefore they have given very brief and second-hand accounts of the transactions embraced in my lectures. I, however, owe the exact date of the murder of Haibat Jang, the governor of Patna, to one work of this class, *Tarikh-i-Muzaffari*, written by Muhammad Ali Khan Ansari, whose family belonged to Panipat and Delhi. The English factory letters fix this date within narrow limits and confirm Ansari.

Therefore, *Siyar-ul-mutakhkharin*, subject to correction and addition from other sources, is our main stay for the detailed narrative of this subject.

Ghulam Husain, the Patna historian.

Ghulam Husain's career and movements and his family connections when examined in detail clearly establish his claim to be regarded as the best authority on the history of these provinces during his own times. In addition to his unrivalled opportunities of knowing the facts, his literary powers were of a high order and justify General Briggs's estimate of *Siyar-ul-mutakhkharin* that "The Duc de Sully, Lord Clarendon, or Bishop Burnet need not have been ashamed to be the author of such a production."

Sayyid Ghulam Husain Tabatabai was the son of Hedayet Ali Khan Bahadur Asad Jang, the son of Alimullah, the son of Faizullah. His maternal uncle (*khalu*) Abdul Ali Khan Bahadur Shuja Jang Musavi, was related to Alivardi Khan as a nephew, probably a cousin's son, the Persian words being *qarabat-i-biradar-zadgi*, and his mother was greatly esteemed by that Nawab and his family. When Alivardi was governor of Bihar in Shuja Khan's reign, he appointed Hedayat Ali as magistrate

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(hakim) of Saris, Kutumba, and other *mahals* in south-west Bihar. Hedayet's younger brother Mahdi Nisar Khan was *bakhshi* of the provincial contingent and had great influence over the soldiery. When in 1742 during the first Maratha invasion, Haibat Jang, the governor of Bihar, set out for Murshidabad to reinforce Alivardi, Hedayet greatly helped him in raising money, satisfying his troops, and making a speedy start, and the grateful governor left him in Patna as his deputy (*naib nazim*.) Just before this, Hedayet had been sent to make war on the Rajah of Ramgarh (Hazaribagh district) and had captured the fort of Chatra there, when Bhaskar's arrival forced him to fall back on Patna. But selfish people poisoned the ears of Haibat Jang and Alivardi against him and Hedayet lost the deputy governorship of Bihar after holding it for about eight months (June 1742 —January 1743). On Haibat Jang's return from Bengal (May 1743) Hedayet resigned his magistracy in disgust, and left Patna with his son on 24th August for Oudh, where he took service under Safdar Jang, and went with his new master to Delhi (November, 1743). He lived there for 18 years, practically deserting his family in Patna.

Ghulam Husain, born in 1728, was the eldest of his four sons, the other three being Naqi Ali, Sayyid Ali and Ghalib Ali. They were educated by excellent private tutors. Ghulam Husain accompanied his father from Patna to Faizabad and Delhi in 1743, and when early next year his father's patron Safdar Jang was appointed imperial *Mir Atish*, they shared his rise. Ghulam Husain and Naqi Ali were presented to the Emperor Muhammad Shah and the two boys received from him the title of *Khan*. Then the brothers returned to Patna

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(arrival on 25th November, 1744): and there shortly afterwards Ghulam Husain, now in his 19th year, was married to the daughter of his maternal uncle, Abdul Ali. (January, 1745).

Within two months of the marriage, a storm burst over Patna. Mustafa Khan, the rebel Afghan general, assaulted the city. Both Ghulam Husain and his brother Naqi Ali (who had probably married Mahdi Nisar's daughter), shared the campaign in the company of their two uncles and were also present at the battle of Karhani in Jagadispur in June and Alivardi's fight with Raghuji Bhonsle near Muhib-ali-pur in November next. In 1747 our author paid a visit to Murshidabad and then returned to Patna. He left that city again on 9th January, 1748 with a view to visiting his father in Bareily, where he arrived about the middle of the next month. Evidently his father could do nothing for him, and so he had to come back to Patna early in November next. Immediately afterwards, though he had secured no employment, he set out with Mahdi Nisar, Naqi Ali and most other relatives and friends in the train of Saulat Jang, the son-in-law of Alivardi, for Murshidabad. On the way, near Mungir he introduced himself to Saulat Jang, who granted subsistence allowances to our author and to Sayyid Ali. Shortly before this Alivardi Khan had broken off the match arranged between this Sayyid Ali and Haibat Jang's daughter, *i.e.*, Siraj-ud-daulah's sister.

Soon afterwards Saulat Jang got the governorship of Purnia and our author lived there in his service, and after his death on 27th March, 1756 at first acted as guardian and chancellor to

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his son, Shaukat Jang. Evil counsellors soon ousted Ghulam Husain and got control over this young and foolish prince's mind, leading him into rebellion against the new Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah and death in battle on 16th October, 1756.

Ghulam Husain, though previously threatened with punishment by Siraj as Shaukat Jang's evil genius,—which he certainly was not,—was pardoned out of Siraj's regard for his mother. With some difficulty our author reached Benares, met there his uncle Abdul Ali and his younger brothers who had been expelled from Patna by Siraj, and they all lived there in extreme poverty and unemployment. On hearing of the fall of Siraj and the accession of Mir Jafar, they returned to their house in Patna. Their only source of income was the rent of their small local jagir.

This needs explanation. Hedayet Ali, after going to Delhi and securing good posts, filled his harem with dancing girls and singers and even contracted a *nikah* marriage with a Kashmiri woman. He now entirely discarded his first wife and her children, who lived in Patna in great distress. As his son complains, "Though Hedayet Ali during seventeen years held the high office of faujdar near Delhi and made *lakhs* of Rupees, he never cared to inquire about his family at Patna, nor sent them any money." Once in a year or two when they had any occasion to write to him on some urgent affair he would send a reply. So, our author was thrown on his own resources without any aid from his father. He was introduced to Mr. Amyatt, chief of the English factory in Patna, by a mutual acquaintance, a refugee of the Persian royal blood, and soon gained the

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esteem and confidence of the English officers, by whom he was often employed on embassies during Mir Qasim's reign. This was the beginning of his fortune. Even before his accession to the Nawabi Mir Qasim used to present him with sums of money to back his cause with his English patrons, and later this Nawab gave him a jagir near Mungir fort yielding Rs. 15,000 a year.*

His later history and that of his father's last years fall within the British period.

The lesson of history.

As we ponder over the history of our native province during the momentous period embraced in these lectures, two lessons force themselves on our minds above all others. One is that the closest harmony and co-operation must be maintained among the different parts of India by the strong bond of an effective and alert central government, if any province is to grow, or even to live. The other is that without general honesty, efficiency and selfless public spirit in all those who have to administer and guard the realm, the country, the

*The following autobiographical sketch of Sayyid Ghulam Husain is given in translation in the *Asiatic Annual Register* for 1801, Characters, pp. 26-27:—

Shahjahanabad was my native place, as well as that of my father and mother. My paternal ancestors are descended from the posterity of Hasan [the grandson of the Prophet], one of those who received the surname of Tabataba. Two ages ago one of them travelled to India and took up his abode in Delhi. My maternal grandfather, Sayyid Zain-ul-abidin Musavi, was son to Alivardi Khan's aunt. In the year 1140 A.H. I was born at Shahjahanabad. I was five years old and my brother Ali Naqi three, when my grandmother, having sold a house at Shahjahanabad, quitted that city, and, taking with her her whole family, including her two married daughters and their husbands, she repaired to Murshidabad, where Alivardi Khan was then employed in the service of the *nazim*, Shuja Khan.

Soon after her arrival at Murshidabad . . . Alivardi Khan was appointed Governor of Patna, whither my father accompanied him, and where our family have, to this day, lived in affluence, dignity and splendour.

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people, and even the ruling class themselves are doomed to destruction. It takes generations of farsighted strenuous and patient toil to raise a people to material prosperity and power of self-defence. One single reign of cowardice, folly or vice in king and minister can undo all the previous good work and level the nation to the dust.

Problem of India's defence.

India may at first sight look like a continent in the diversity of her races, climate and natural products. But she does not possess the advantages of a true continent in which each country is clearly marked off from the others by strong physical barriers, compactness of territory, homogeneity of race and a commonness of tradition and spirit born of unity of government during many centuries. The extreme variety of population, climate and habits of life in India naturally tends to counteract and weaken any force imposed from outside to hold the different provinces together; and yet the fact of her being one geographical unit makes the defence of her frontier against foreign aggression impossible unless the armed strength and material resources of the entire country are concentrated for the purpose. No province acting in isolation can long make a stand against an invader from outside. Provincial defence, to be successful, must be an imperial concern and must be conducted by the federal government with all the revenue and man-power of this continent behind it.

In most cases no natural obstacle separates one province of India from another, and even where such barriers exist they are so slight that during most part of the year they can be easily surmount-

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ed. As a natural consequence of this unalterable fact, the foreign conquest of one of our border provinces, such as the North-western frontier or the South-eastern sea-board, lays the far inland provinces bare of defence and open to frequent and easy attack. If, therefore, the independence of any Indian province is to be effectively guarded, it must be closely and constantly linked with the Central Government of the whole country. The extremities of the Indian empire must be joined to its heart by an ever-present sense of vital connection and sameness of fortune.

Central Government closely united to Provinces

And that is not possible unless the provinces realise that the law of their being enjoins on them mutual co-operation under one common sovereign, that an absolutely isolated self-centred existence would be a fatal dream to any one of them, and that their life and liberty depend upon their looking beyond their own narrow bounds to that Greater India of which they must be loyal and helpful children and to whose needs they must cheerfully subordinate all their local interests and parochial pride.

At the same time the Central Government must be a true father to its numerous household of children. There must be a live and beneficent contact between it and the provinces. It should be an ever-present reality to the provinces, and not an abstract theory or a far-off political convention. In other words, the central governors must frequently tour the provinces and the provincial leaders must frequently come in contact with the centre by means of political, economic and cultural missions of common concern to the whole land.

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Above all, the Central Government must convince the provinces that it exists solely for their good and has no interest apart from or antagonistic to theirs. The Central Government must be felt by the provincials as a part and parcel of their daily existence.

How dissolution of Mughal Empire began

Therefore, when the Padishah became a sluggard and a voluptuary, passing his days in pleasure or idleness at Delhi, when he withdrew himself from the gaze of his subjects by burying himself in his harem or palace park, and was effectually screened from contact with the public by the interposition of a dictatorial *wazir*, the living bond between the Central Government and the provinces was dissolved. Provincial administration could no longer be effectively or honestly conducted when the master's eye was withdrawn from it. With a mere cypher on the throne, the people of the provinces became the helpless prey of local governors, who were subservient agents of mercenary nobles in power at the imperial Court and did their best to make money out of their province during their brief uncertain period of office. The imperial connection, therefore, became merely a means of draining the provinces of their wealth, without giving them anything in return for the exactions, legal and illegal, to which they were subjected. Such an unnatural arrangement cannot continue long. Then the dismemberment of the empire inevitably follows. The heart of the empire having become weak, the imperial authority grows cold and dead in the extremities. The unifying and life-giving centre having become really dead, the parts begin to fall off. The provinces farthest from the capital

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are the first to be lost to the empire, either by declaring their independence under some dynasty of their own, or by being conquered by a foreign Power.

Rise of independent dynasties in provinces

But the rise of an independent provincial dynasty is imperceptibly preluded and rendered easy and natural by some local governor during the declining days of the empire ruling over the province continuously for a long time, at first as an avowed viceroy or servant of the Central Government. Such founders of local dynasties have always been men of exceptional capacity and vigour, and they have won an abiding place in the hearts of their subjects by promoting their safety and welfare amidst the dissolution of political order around them, and by creating local ties and local interests through long residence in authority in one place. The dismemberment of the Mughal Empire was immediately preceded in each of its lost provinces by the exceptionally long rule of some exceptionally able *subahdar*, who completed his work by founding a dynasty and transmitting his power to his own family, though securing outward legal sanction to this hereditary succession by means of gifts to the impotent Emperor. These men formed a striking contrast to the earlier short-term *subahdars* who were never permitted to govern a province for more than three or four years, in the days when the Mughal Emperor was a real power in the land.

Examples of founder viceroys

In Bengal it was Murshid Quli Khan, who ruled the province without a break from 1707 to his death in 1727, and left a throne to his son-in-law

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Shuja Khan. In the Deccan it was Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah, first appointed to the viceroyalty in 1713, then removed, and finally reinstated in 1725 to hold that realm till his death in 1748 and to bequeathe it to his progeny. In Oudh it was Sadat Khan, appointed in 1723, and succeeded on his death in 1739 by his nephew Safdar Jang and his line. In the Punjab it was Saifuddaulah I, who got the *subahdari* in 1713, and was succeeded in 1726 by his son Zakariya Khan entitled Saifuddaulah II. The latter dying in 1745 left his two provinces Lahore and Multan to his sons Yahiya and Hayatullah. On the other hand, Gujrat, Malwa and Orissa were lost to the Empire by foreign conquest as distinct from the rise of a provincial dynasty.

These founder-viceroys did immense benefit to the people whose happy lot it was to be governed by them. Being strong and capable men, they successfully enforced law and order and fostered the growth of wealth and population in their charge. They saved their subjects not only from robbers but also from illegal exactions by office underlings, as the lion cannot tolerate the jackal's depredations in his forest. The lesser *subahdars* could not do this. Long connection with one province, also, allowed the growth of personal ties between the viceroy and his subjects and gave him the same interest in their welfare that a hereditary landlord takes in the prosperity of his tenants and which no temporary farmer of the revenue can feel. The people really gained by thus securing a permanent local master instead of a rapidly changing succession of blood-suckers sent out from the imperial Court. With the growth of such

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a family tie with the province in their charge, these founder-viceroys came to look upon the governed as their own children.

Decline of provincial administration

I have shown how during the decadence of the Empire the foundation of independent provincial dynasties was a blessing to the local people. But in time it produced its inevitable evil consequence, too. So long as the Emperors of Delhi were strong and able men, they could send competent viceroys to the *subahs* and remove incompetent ones; they could, as the supreme appellate court, effectually interpose when any flagrant injustice was done by the local governors; and they could suppress lawlessness in the provinces by sending there an army of their own whenever the provincial forces proved unequal to the task. But with the rise of local independence this union with the Central Government was severed, and no relief could come from it.

Further, the destiny of the province became tied down to one family and had to suffer as the character of that family declined. The French have a wise saying, "The only defect of autocracy is that it implies the autocrat", or in other words, autocracy would be the best form of Government if we could always get a hero as king over us. But Nature does not guarantee a succession of supermen in the same family; her normal process is rather the reverse of it, and the sons and grandsons of supermen are usually found to be below the average in intellect and character. But with hereditary succession to the throne and absolute power in the hands of the sovereign, an independent State has no escape from the misrule of fools

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or knaves, except rebellion by a great general. Even that remedy is a mere temporary palliative; the successful rebel finds that once the charm of hereditary succession is broken every ambitious man's hand is raised against him and his example calls forth imitators who trouble his reign. That was Alivardi Khan's painful experience, and it crippled him in his fight with enemies from outside.

The strong and able rule of Alivardi Khan was inevitably followed by the accession of Siraj-ud-daulah, a youth of 23, with unruly passions, insane pride, and total ignorance of men and affairs. He had been utterly spoiled by the softness of his doting grandfather and the precocious indulgence of every vice. Alivardi did foresee what was coming; when he lost his able nephews one after another and no heir was left in his family except Siraj-ud-daulah, he remarked, "If God had intended the kingdom to remain in my line, He would not have removed Haibat Jang." But there was no escape from heredity. After the death of Haibat Jang (1748) the Nawab promised the government of Bihar to Saulat Jang. But Siraj-ud-daulah, the son of the deceased, declared that the post had been held by his father and was his due by right of birth and if it went to any one else it would be a disgrace to him, which he would avoid by taking poison. The old Nawab yielded to this strange logic and silly threat. And so the charge of this large and important frontier province was given to a boy of fifteen, with a mature deputy to do the real work for him. The absurdity of hereditary succession to public offices could go no further, and the result was seen in the unhappy history of this country even before Alivardi closed his eyes in death.

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II.

First Maratha Invasion 1742—its horrors—how it was beaten back.

How the Maratha Power spread over the Mughal Empire.

The decline of the Mughal Empire presented an opportunity by which the Marathas profited more than any other people in India. Already, before Aurangzib was dead they had arrested the imperial expansion in their home-land and forced the Delhi Government to acknowledge defeat. The successors of that monarch were too weak to make any attempt at recovering their lost suzerainty in the Deccan and had much difficulty even in holding their own. Selfish quarrels among the Delhi nobility, no less than the moral decadence of the later Emperors and their army, hastened the collapse of the imperial authority in the South. When noble fought noble for the *subahdari* of Gujrat or the Deccan, whichever side won, the invariable result was to increase the relative strength of the Marathas. Thus, the Mughal Government failed to derive any benefit from the utter anarchy that devastated the Maharashtra country for several years after Shahu's return home from captivity (in 1707) and the factious jealousy that raged among the Maratha nobles.

And soon the genius of his *wazir* Balaji Vishwanath, the Peshwa, placed Shahu above his rivals and secured for his Government a practical control over his country and its people. The next

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Peshwa, Balaji Rao's son Baji Rao I, was an ambitious schemer, a daring soldier, and a most enterprising leader. During his term of office (1720—1740) the Marathas completely overshadowed the legitimate Government in Gujrat, Malwa and Bundelkhand, while the Deccan proper was as good as ceded to them. The jealous opposition of his rivals, especially the *Senapati* Trimbak Rao Dhabade and the *Sena Sahib Subah* Raghuji Bhonsle,—both of the Maratha caste, while the Peshwas were Brahmans,—retarded the establishment of Baji Rao's own supremacy in the administration and the unchallenged imposition of Maratha authority over these *subahs*. But this set-back was temporary. After some fluctuations of fortune and even bloody internecine wars (like the battle of Dabhoi where Dhabade was killed on 1st April, 1731, and a fight with Raghuji Bhonsle in February, 1739), Baji Rao near the end of his life wisely realized the practical limits of his own power and agreed to a scheme for amicably partitioning the Mughal provinces among the rival Maratha generals as their "spheres of influence," so that each *sardar* would be free to plunder tax and dominate over his special hunting ground without fear of encroachment or obstruction by any other officer of his master. As a result of this arrangement Gujrat, Berar and Dhar passed to the Dhabade the Bhonsle and the Pawar families respectively, while Malwa and Bundelkhand remained as the Peshwa's own preserve, with direct access to the Court of Delhi. The plunder of the Madras Karnatak was to be the joint enterprise of several chiefs, particularly the Rajahs of Berar and the South Maratha country, these places being situated nearest to that province.

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Shahu completed and sanctioned this partition of the Mughal Empire as the best course for the Maratha people as a whole.

Raghuji Bhonsle's ambition of ruling at Satara as his master's master in the place of the Peshwa having been defeated by Baji Rao's superior education and inborn genius for war and organisation, he naturally pursued the path of expansion left open to him in the north-east and east of his domain of Nagpur, namely by raiding Bengal, Bihar and Orissa across the intervening jungles and hills. And soon he received invitations from domestic enemies of that *subah* on the eastern-most frontier of the Mughal Empire. It was a God-send to Raghuji. His recent Karnatak venture had brought him no gain owing to too many greedy rivals having entered that field; his raids into the Peshwa's spheres of influence had failed; and he was now sunk over head and ears in debt from his inflated army expenditure. His creditors were pressing him hard, so much so that in September, 1742, he durst not accept Shahu's invitation to visit him at Satara lest that king should demand his dues, which Raghuji saw no means of paying. One only path of relief seemed to be open before him, namely the plunder of Bengal, whose wealth was proverbial throughout India and which had paid no *chauth* to the Marathas up to now.

Independent governor of Bengal subah

At the time of Aurangzib's death (1707), Murshid Quli Khan (surnamed Jafar Khan Nasiri, Nasir Jang, Mutaman-ul-mulk) was deputy governor (*naib nazim*)of Bengal and Orissa, as well as *diwan* or revenue chief of these two provinces. The absence of the governor Prince Azim-ush-

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shan at the imperial Court during the next four years made Murshid Quli the virtual ruler of Bengal. Farrukh-siyar on his accession (1713) made him the substantive governor of Bengal in addition to his diwan-ship. In 1719 the full governorship of Orissa was conferred upon him [*Siyar*, ii. 8, *Riyaz*, 250-252, 273-276.] Murshid Quli's strong, honest and efficient administration, love of justice, and strict enforcement of peace and order greatly increased the wealth and happiness of the people and fostered the growth of trade in the country. When he died (30th June, 1727) he was succeeded by his son-in-law Shuja-ud-din Muhammad Khan (surnamed Shuja ud-daulah, Asad Jang) in the rule of the two provinces, to which Bihar was added by the Emperor about 1733. Shuja also enjoyed a peaceful and prosperous reign.

On the death of Shuja (13th March, 1739), his son, Sarfaraz Khan (entitled Ala-ud-daulah Haidar Jang) became *subahdar* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. But this youthful ruler's excessive licentiousness, which (as so often happens in the East) he indulged in under the cloak of constant devotion to religious practices and love of the society of theologians, caused a rapid decline in the administration. The evil was aggravated by the new Nawab's jealous hostility to Alivardi Khan and his elder brother Haji Ahmad, who had been the ablest and best-equipped officers during the last two reigns. Alivardi, knowing that his life and honour would be attacked by his worthless master whenever he could be caught at a disadvantage, decided to strike the first blow in self-defence. With remarkable skill and courage, he led an expedition from Patna (where he was

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Deputy Governor) into Bengal, defeated and slew Sarfaraz at the battle of Gheria (10th April 1740), and made himself Nawab of the three provinces, afterwards securing the recognition of his act of might from the Emperor by profuse bribery. This act of usurpation opened the flood-gate of trouble on Bengal by encouraging in others the desire to imitate his illegal violence and open defiance of the imperial Government.

How Alivardi won and lost Orissa and won it again in 1741.

Rustam Jang (originally named Murshid Quli), the son-in-law of Shuja and deputy governor of Orissa, was goaded on by his wife Dardana Begam to avenge her half-brother Sarfaraz's death. He refused to acknowledge the authority of the successful regicide in Bengal, declared his own independence, and in the ensuing cold weather marched from Katak to Balesar with the object of conquering Bengal. Alivardi advanced from his capital to meet the danger. For some weeks the two armies lay facing each other in their trenches near Balesar, with occasional skirmishes between their patrols. At last, on 3rd March, 1741, a battle was precipitated by Rustam's impetuous son-in-law, Baqar Ali, who left his impregnable trenches and numerous artillery behind him and attacked Alivardi on the plain of Fulwari (four miles north of Balesar town), but was routed after a severe fight. Rustam Jang fled to Masulipatam in a friend's ship then happily lying at anchor off the port. There was no opposition to Alivardi's advance on Katak, which he occupied and where he installed his son-in-law Said Ahmad (surnamed Maham-ud-daulah Saulat Jang) as deputy governor, and then returned to his capital.

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But in August, Baqar Ali, after hiring Maratha helpers from the Karnatak, returned to Orissa, captured Katak by a sudden attack, made its worthless and unpopular governor and his entire family prisoners, and seized the government of the province. Alivardi, in great distress, collected a strong force, marched into Orissa again, defeated Baqar Ali on the bank of the Mahanadi,* rescued his son-in-law, and drove Baqar Ali and his Maratha allies into flight to the Deccan (early in December, 1741).

Meantime, in another corner of his dominions his local deputy had sent an expedition to bring the refractory Rajah of the jungly district of Ramgarh (modern Hazaribagh) under subjection. The zamindar who was thus antagonised naturally offered no opposition to the Marathas on their way to invade Bengal through his territory. Nagpur is so situated that a force issuing from it as a base can most quickly and easily enter Bihar by way of Gondwana and Chota Nagpur if it marches north-east, or the Bardwan and Murshidabad districts of Bengal by way of Pachet which lies due east, or Orissa if it takes any of the jungle paths further south. It was impossible for the ruler of Bengal to guard all of these numberless routes in sufficient strength or block the path of the Marathas at any threatened pass by superior mobility in transferring his troops there. The way had been partly explored by the Nagpur Marathas in April 1740 when a band of them had entered the Benares district and plundered three large places in it, and though they retired next

* At a place called *Riapur* in Bengal letter of 23rd December, 1741 and *Ghat Chopra* in *Riyaz*, 335. Rustam Jang and his family's reception by the Nizam (*Hadiqat-ul-alam*, ii. 173.)

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month the alarm had penetrated as far as Murshidabad. [Bengal let, 3 Jan. 1741.]

First Maratha incursion, 1742.

After recovering Katak from Baqar Ali, the Nawab passed two or three months there restoring the administration and making the necessary arrangements, and then he set out on his return to Bengal. On the way he halted near Balesar to send detachments into the Mayurbhanj country to punish its Rajah for his unfriendly attitude during the recent war. While thus delayed, the Nawab heard at Jaygarh that Raghuji Bhonsle had sent his prime minister, Bhaskar Ram Kolhatkar, with a strong force to invade Bengal and collect *chauth* from the province and that Bhaskar was moving towards the passes of Pachet from which Murshidabad was only eight days' march eastwards. Despising these enemies as mere brigands, Alivardi took no measure of defence, but continued his leisurely return towards Bardwan. Further on the way, at Mubarak Manzil;* he learnt that the Marathas had already passed through Pachet and entered the Bardwan district. By a forced march of one night and day the Nawab arrived at Bardwan and encamped outside that town on the bank of the Rani's tank (15th April, 1742).

*Its modern name is *Shahin-bandi*, in the Arambagh subdivision of the Hughli district, as proved by M. Md. Anzam in the *Prabasi* magazine, (Asharh, 1338, p. 382). Salimullah (116*a*) and *Riyaz* (p. 340) call the place *Achalon Sarai*, which is situated on the old road from Medinipur to Bardwan, 11 miles north of Arambagh (formerly called Jahanabad) town and 13 miles south of Bardwan. Two miles south of Achalon is *Mughal-mari*.

Bhaskar Rao's force is estimated by Grant Duff (ii. 11) on the basis of Maratha records as 10,000 to 12,000. *Siyar* (ii. 117) gives "25,000, which rumour swelled to 40,000." Chandernagor factory letter based on rumour gives 80,000!

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Early next morning he was astonished to discover that during the preceding night the Maratha light horse had completely encircled his camp. Their march had been so swift and secret that the Nawab's spies had failed to get any news of their position and line of advance till it was too late.

Alivardi invested in Bardwan.

Alivardi was now in a situation of extreme peril. After his reconquest of Orissa, as he had no enemy in view, he had sent back most of his troops to Murshidabad in advance of himself. At this time he had only 3,000 to 4,000 cavalry and 4,000 to 5,000 foot musketeers with him. The Maratha horde immediately hemmed this small force round and effectually cut off its food supply, without venturing on any pitched battle. The daily skirmsihes of his foraging parties with the enemy could produce no decision nor clear a way for his escape. A week passed in this way. Bhaskar himseif took post at Bardwan with 14 of his captains to continue the investment of the Nawab's camp, while his other ten captains with their contingents roamed over the country plundering the villages far and wide. The result was that not only could no grain-dealer reach the Bengal camp but all the sources of grain supply around Bardwan were also destroyed. Alivardi at last realised that to remain stationary in his encampment was to court death by starvation.

At first he had asked Bhaskar for terms and the latter had demanded Rupees 10 *lakhs* as the price of his retreat. The Nawab's generals persuaded him that it would be wiser to distribute this amount among his soldiers and hearten them to fight well and expel the enemy than to buy off

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the invaders, who would thereby be only tempted to renew their raids year after year.

From Bardwan (north of the Damodar river) the old Mughal road proceeds north-east to Katwa, 35 miles off. On this road, 21 miles from Bardwan, is a half way station at Nigun sarai, from which Katwa is only 14 miles distant. At Katwa the old course of the Ganges, called Bhagirathi or the river of Murshidabad and Calcutta, is crossed and the road runs 40 miles northwards to Murshidabad, the capital of Bengal under the later Mughal dynasty. Eleven miles up from Katwa on the eastern bank of the river stands the village of Palashi (Plassey), the scene of the historic battle which gave Bengal to the English. The entire country is a dead flat alluvial plain.

Alivardi fights his way to Katwa.

Alivardi, therefore, decided to make a night march in light equipment with a select force, surprise the Maratha cordon, and cut his way through it. The success of this plan depended entirely on his being able to move with strict secrecy and superior mobility, and he failed in both respects. When he led his army out of his camp, ordering the countless servants and other non-combatants to remain at Bardwan, they feared that the Nawab was running away with his escort abandoning them to the mercy of the invaders without any means of defence. Every one in the camp, therefore, pressed close on the detachment and it soon became a noisy, unwieldy and slow-moving body. The projected surprise entirely failed.

In this condition the Bengal column was discovered in the morning and enveloped by the

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Maratha light horse. By four o'clock in the evening its advance was entirely stopped, and it came to a halt in a muddy rice-field. When Alivardi ordered a charge to clear a path in front, the Afghan soldiers who formed the backbone of his army made a mere show of fighting without really engaging the enemy. The reason was that they were discontented with the Nawab for his not satisfying the greed of their leaders. The Maratha horse circling round forced the stragglers and rearguard to crowd for safety upon their own centre, abandoning the baggage and tents which were slowly coming up from behind. The enemy seized the opportunity, set fire to the tents, looted the property in the camp, and cut down the stragglers, only a few of whom escaped. The column passed all that afternoon and the following night in the rice-field, without food or shelter and unable either to advance or to retreat.

Alivardi now became a prisoner in deed. In order to gain time for reinforcements to reach him, he opened negotiations with the Marathas. But Bhaskar knew the strength of his position; he demanded as the price of peace all the Nawab's elephants in addition to one *kror* of Rupees. Next night Alivardi made an appeal to the generosity of his Afghans. He went to their tents in utter humility, unaccompanied by a single attendant or torch-bearer and taking his infant grandson Siraj-ud-daulah by the hand, and placed his honour and the lives of both at the feet of their captains. This move won over Mustafa Khan, their leading general. Roused by Mustafa's eloquent and chivalrous speech, the Afghan soldiers vowed to defend their master to the death.

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In the morning the Bengal army resumed its march towards Katwa. All its tents, baggage and provisions had been lost, but the artillery still remained and proved very useful in forcing the Maratha spearmen to keep at a respectful distance. In this way, these men, now greatly reduced in number, cut their way to Nigunsarai, where a desperate rear-guard action was fought to check the enemy and Musahib Khan fell. Next day Katwa was reached. During this march, whenever the Bengal army halted, the pursuing Marathas used to halt likewise, just beyond the range of the *jizails*, while their roving bands plundered and burnt the villages for ten miles on each side of the road at every stage. Fighting daily on empty stomachs in this manner, the Nawab and his army reached Katwa with their bare lives. This small town had been previously sacked and burnt by the Marathas; but the famished Bengal troops were glad to appease their hunger with the half burnt rice that they could rake up among the ashes of the houses. Soon provisions, artillery and fresh troops reached Katwa from Murshidabad, and the Nawab's army was restored to strength and comfort.

Mir Habib, his career and character.

In the retreat from Bardwan Mir Habib, an officer of the Nawab, had been captured by the enemy. This man at once transferred his services to them and proved their most useful ally and the greatest scourge of Bengal. His local knowledge, ability and persistence alone gave to the Maratha invasion of these three eastern provinces its long-drawn relentless and desolating character. Mir Habib was a native of Shiraz in Persia. Emigrating to Hughli he at first earned

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a scanty living by hawking from house to house such goods as he could get on credit from the merchants of his own country settled at that port. Though an absolutely illiterate man, his ready wit, extreme suavity of speech, and perfect command of the Persian language (which was his mother tongue) soon enabled him to make his way into the highest circle of society. The pedlar discarded his original profession and blossomed into the chief confidant and deputy (*naib*) of Rustam Jang, rising as his master rose in the service of successive Nawabs. When Rustam Jang was appointed governor of Dacca, Habib by his attention to details and strict economy effected large savings in the expenditure of the Government flotilla, artillery and military departments. At the same time he enriched his master by unauthorised encroachment on private trade and a predatory incursion into Tippera, till he was raised to the peerage. During Rustam Jang's governorship of Orissa, Habib as his agent (*naib*) ran the entire administration and distinguished himself by ably managing the public business, keeping the zamindars under control, and greatly increasing his master's income. His ability and tireless activity were only equalled by his boundless ambition, implacable enmity to Alivardi Khan, and utter lack of moral scruple or generous sentiment.

Maratha dash upon Murshidabad, May 6, 1742.

It was now the beginning of May (1742), in which month the heavy rains begin in Bengal and quickly render the roads unfit for passage and the rivers too deep to be forded. Bhaskar, therefore,

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wanted to retire in haste to Nagpur through the uplands of Birbhum. But Mir Habib pointed out that the rich and defenceless capital of Bengal would prove an easy prey if the Marathas made a lightning raid on it during the Nawab's absence. He took this task on himself, as he knew all about the city and his wives and children were living there in charge of his brother.

With 700 well-mounted Maratha horsemen, Mir Habib made a night march from Katwa and reached Dahapara, opposite Murshidabad, in the morning of 6th May, burnt its bazar, and then crossed over at the ferry of Hajiganj, to the city of Murshidabad, which had no wall around it. The city, denuded of troops, could make no defence, mainly owing to the cowardice of its governor Haji Ahmad, the elder brother of the Nawab. The greatest alarm and confusion raged in the capital of Bengal throughout that day and night. Haji Ahmad fled to the fort, leaving the city to its fate. The Marathas plundered from the house of Fatehchand (surnamed Jagat Seth or the Chief Banker) in the suburbs nearly three *lakhs* of Rupees, and also several other richmen's mansions without the least check, and in the evening recrossed the river to Tirathkona (west of Murshidabad), where they halted for the night.

But Alivardi had, immediately on hearing of this movement of the Marathas, hurried up from Katwa on their heels and arrived at his capital in the morning of the 7th. The raiders then beat a hasty retreat to Katwa, after sacking and setting fire to Tirathkona and the villages around it. The "three nations"—the English, the French and the Dutch—had left their factories in Qasimbazar (the southern suburb of Murshidabad) with their

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goods on the approach of the Marathas on the 6th, but when they learnt of the Nawab's predominance they returned to their places of business in the city. At Calcutta repairs were begun to the fortifications in April, in fear of the coming of the Marathas, but when they retired beyond the Ganges, these works were stopped on 17th May. Another measure of economy on the part of the E. I. Company was the discharge on that date of 200 foot musketeers of Baksar who had been hastily engaged for the defence of Calcutta at the first alarm.

Early in May, after the Nawab had cleared his capital of the enemy, the Marathas retired to Katwa and then set out on their return home in order to avoid the monsoon rains of Bengal. But Mir Habib brought them back from the way (Birbhum) with reproaches for their lack of spirit and holding out alluring hopes of plunder. So, from the month of June, Katwa became their head quarters and Mir Habib their chief adviser and centre of all affairs (*madar-ul-maham*). The districts west of the Ganges now passed into their hands. "They set up outposts in many places and occupied the country from Rajmahal to Medinipur and Jalesar. All rich and respectable people abandoned their homes and migrated to the eastern side of the Ganges in order to save their family honour." (Salimullah, 120*a*.)

Marathas capture Hughli fort

Hughli was the most important station of the Mughal Government on the west bank of the Ganges in Lower Bengal. Within its jurisdiction lay Calcutta, Chandernagar and Chinsura, the chief factories of the English, the French and the

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Dutch respectively, and all ocean-going trade-vessels in Bengal had to do the necessary official business with it. It was also the seat of the Mughal naval power in West Bengal and the chief centre of foreign commerce to the subjects of the Nawab. The commandant (*faujdar*) of Hughli at this time was Muhammad Raza who used to pass his nights in drinking deep and making merry with dancing-girls and singers, to the total neglect of his duties.* Mir Habib had many old friends among the Persian merchants here, their leader being one Abul Hasan. He sent secret emissaries to them, and these traitors formed a conspiracy to deliver the fort up to the enemy. On the appointed night, Mir Habib with 2,000 Marathas under Shesh Rao arrived silently outside the fort. According to their plot, Abul Hasan reported to Muhammad Raza, "Your old friend Mir Habib is standing at the gate begging for a private interview with you." The drunken *faujdar* ordered the gate to be opened without making any inquiry or taking the usual precautions. As Habib passed into the gateway, a number of Marathas suddenly rushed in with him, overpowered the guards, occupied the fort, and made the Nawab's officers prisoners (early in July).

All West Bengal in Maratha occupation.

Thus Hughli passed into Maratha possession and Shesh Rao was installed there as the conqueror's

* The governor (*hakim*) of the port, acc. to *Siyar*, ii. 122, was Md. Yar Kh. reputed brother of Alivardi, popularly called Mirza Piare (as we find from Pondicherry letter of 4th April, 1743 N. S.) Chandernagar factors sent Rs. 4,000 to ransom him from the Marathas. *Riyaz* 344 calls Md. Raza *naib faujdar*. Salimullah 119*b* wrongly writes that Hughli was then under "Md. Raza and Mirza Piare the *faujdar*." *Maharashtra Puran* wrongly speaks of *Sher Kh.* as *faujdar* of Hughli.

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governor. Unlike other Maratha chiefs, he was polite, considerate to others, just, and merciful. His good administration soon won the landholders and even the European traders of these parts over to his side. Mir Habib acted as the diwan of Bengal on behalf of the Marathas, sent bailiffs to summon the zamindars to his presence to arrange for the payment of the land revenue to him, and in all matters acted as the supreme agent of the Rajah of Nagpur. The Nawab's rule ceased in West Bengal. The President of the English Council in Calcutta, by a judicious bribe of Rs. 4,317 disguised under the name of an advance, most part of which went to Mir Habib, secured that officer's protection, because the Mir "was in great favour with the (Maratha) General and being well acquainted with the European nations' affairs was of singular use." [Bengal let., 8 Jan, 1743.]

Mir Habib also took away some pieces of artillery and a sloop mounting guns from Hughli to Katwa, and thus strengthened the invading army of light raiders with two arms which they had hitherto totally lacked and which they could not have dreamt of securing in Bengal but for him.

In Upper Bengal, *i. e.*, from Murshidabad northwards and eastwards as well as in East Bengal, the Nawab's authority was maintained. In June the English sent a detachment of 180 soldiers under Captain Holcombe to Murcha (on the south bank of the Padma or the largest stream of the Ganges, 16 miles north-east of Murshidabad). These men remained there for some months and were "of great service in securing the convoy of goods from *arangs* (cotton cloth factories), relieving parties from Patna and Qasimbazar, and they impeded the

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Marathas from proceeding up country above them; it also hindered the Government's *chaukis* (patrols) from plundering effects."

But even the country east of the Ganges did not always remain safe from Maratha ravage. On Bhaskar's return in June, the main body of his troops halted at Katwa, but small parties roamed about the island of Qasimbazar. They once or twice penetrated as far as Palashi and Daudpur (seven miles north of Palashi and 20 miles south of Murshidabad), burnt the villages around and then returned to Katwa. A bridge built by Mir Habib at Dainhat, with boats commandeered from far and near, enabled the raiders to cross easily from one bank to the other. After a month the Ganges became swollen with rain and the Marathas could no longer cross over to its eastern side.

Atrocities and devastation committed by the Marathas.

All over the country from which the Nawab's authority had disappeared, the Maratha hordes committed wanton destruction and unspeakable outrage on the roads and villages.

Utter terror raged throughout Bengal in consequence of their atrocities. The state of the country is thus graphically described in the English factory letters: "The Marathas are plundering Birbhum (July, 1742) which has put a stop to all business, the merchants and weavers flying wherever they can." And again, "The chief seat of the war being the *gara* (a kind of coarse cotton cloth) country, ...alarm of the Marathas frightened the merchants from further engagements. Silk weavers and inhabitants fled... Qasimbazar is the center of all the troubles in the country."

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An eye-witness, the Bengali poet Gangaram, thus describes the sufferings of the people:

"The *Bargis* *began to loot the villages. Every class of men took to flight with their property,..... when suddenly the *Bargis* came up and encircled them in the plain. They snatched away gold and silver, rejecting everything else. Of some people they cut off the hand, of some the nose and ears; some they killed outright. They dragged away the beautiful women, tying their fingers to their necks with ropes. When one *Bargi* had done with a woman, another seized her;† the women shrieked in the agony of ravishment. The *Bargis* after thus committing all sinful acts, set these women free. Then, after looting in the open, the *Bargis* entered the villages. They set fire to the houses, large and small, temples and dwelling-places. After burning the villages they roamed about on all sides plundering. Some victims they tied up with their arms twisted behind them. Some they flung down and kicked with their shoes. They constantly shouted, 'Give us Rupees, give us Rupees.' Where they got no Rupee, they filled their victims'

* *Bargi* is a corruption of *Bargir* (a Persian loan-word in Marathi), meaning a horseman supplied with his mount and arms by Government, as opposed to a *silahdar* who was equipped and mounted at his own expense.

† The Maratha soldiers were notorious for their practice of gang-rape in invaded territories from a very early time. In 1683 when they invaded the Goa districts under the eyes of their king Shambhuji, they committed this kind of outrage. A contemporary Portuguese account of that war states: "These enemies were so barbarous that when a woman appeared very beautiful (lit., best) to them, five or six of them violated her by lying with that woman alone. Up to now nowhere else in India has such barbarity been seen, nor even among the Kafris (Negroes). For this reason, many women of Margaon . . . threw themselves into pools, where they died of drowning. Others who bravely resisted the lewd intentions of some of the enemy soldiers, were killed with strokes of the broadsword, and of some others the breasts were cut off." (Tr. from Pissurlencar's *Portugueses e Maratas*, ii. 49. There is another Eng. tr. in I. O. L. *Portuguese Records*, Noticias da India, vol. i. part. 2.)

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nostrils with water or drowned them in tanks. Some were put to death by suffocation. Those who had money, gave it to the *Bargis;* those who had none had to give up their lives. It was only after crossing the Bhagirathi that people found safety." After this is given a long list of the villages and parganahs sacked and burnt by the raiders.

Another contemporary, Vaneshwar Vidyalankar, the Court Pandit of the Maharajah of Bardwan, wrote in November, 1744: "Shahu Rajah's troops are niggard of pity, slayers of pregnant women and infants, of Brahmans and the poor, fierce of spirit, expert in robbing the property of every one and in committing every sinful act.* They created a local cataclysm and caused the extirpation of the people of the Bengal villages like an (ominous) comet. . . In one day they can cross a hundred *yojans*. They slay the unarmed, the poor, women and children. They rob all property and abduct chaste wives. If it comes to a battle, they secretly flee away to some other country. Their main strength lies in their marvellously swift horses. Such was the tumultuous ocean of *Bargi* troops."

The Muslim historians Salimullah and Ghulam Husain Salim confirm this account. They write, "The *Bargis* cut off the ears, noses and hands of

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* कृपा-कृपणः कृपाण-पाणि-गर्भवत्यर्भक-दैवत-द्विज-सूनु-दीन-दारण-दारुण-पणः। प्रतिषिद्धाचरण-मात्र-निपुणः—हीनास्त्र-दीनान् स्त्रियोबालान् घ्नन्ति हरन्ति वित्तम-खिलं साध्वीश्च सीमन्तिनीः॥

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multitudes of people, or killed them with many kinds of torture and suffering,—by gagging their mouths with bags of dust or drowning them. They destroyed the honour of the people " (*i.e.* outraged the women.) The letters from the French factory at Chandernagar and the English settlement of Calcutta tell the same tale of oppression.

Alivardi's defensive measures.

While all this was happening to his subjects, Alivardi's one thought was how to expel the raiders from the country. "He banished sleep and repose from his body in planning day and night the defeat of the enemy." (Salimullah.) He was clearly outnumbered by the Marathas. His soldiers were reduced in number, war-worn, and discontented by reason of quarrels about pay and bounty. The Maratha system of warfare was quite novel to them and they knew not how to meet these tactics. So, the Nawab at first confined himself to defending his capital by forming a camp outside it, at Amaniganj and Tarakpur, and decided to put off the campaign against the enemy till the coming winter, when the reinforcements called up by him from his deputies in Purnia and Patna would reach him, and the Emperor also, who had been urgently appealed to for help, was expected to cause a diversion from the direction of Upper India. Alivardi distributed ten *lakhs* of Rupees to his troops and replenished their equipment. From Purnia and Patna his deputies reached him accompanied by 5,000 and 12,000 men respectively, before the rainy season was over.

The Nawab surprises the Maratha camp at Katwa on 27th September.

Pressed by Zainuddin Ahmad (the *naib nazim*

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of Patna), Alivardi wisely changed his plan, and decided to attack the Marathas before the drying of the roads and the fall of the river-level would restore to the light Deccani horse its natural advantage. Meantime, Bhaskar, secure in the possession of West Bengal, was celebrating* the Durga Puja, the greatest festival among the Hindus of Bengal, in the most gorgeous style with forced contributions from all the zamindars. Here the Nawab surprised him early in the morning of the third day of the ceremony, the Navami, 27th September, 1742.

Katwa stands at the junction of two rivers, the Ganges running from north to south, and a smaller stream called the Ajay flowing into it from the west. The Nawab, coming from Murshidabad, would have to cross the Ganges only if he attacked Katwa from the south, and both the rivers if he tried to reach the place from the north and the west. The presence of an armed sloop of the enemy in the Ganges alongside Katwa and the alertness of the Maratha troops on that river-face made it impossible for him to cross the Ganges at that place. He had entrenched the eastern bank of the river facing Katwa and fired for eight days upon the Maratha position across with no result. So, he decided on a wide detour by the north and west in order to reach the enemy in secrecy and attack their unprotected western flank by surprise. Some miles above Katwa both banks of the Ganges were in the Nawab's possession, with no Maratha band in sight. Here the Nawab built a bridge of large boats across the Ganges at Uddharanpur and transferred his "storm troops," ten thousand picked men, to the north bank of the Ajay.

* At Dainhat, according to Gangaram.

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About a mile above the western or left wing of the Maratha camp the Nawab had gradually collected a number of smaller boats unsuspected and unopposed by the enemy, by following the cunning device of sending them to creep from the Ganges up the Ajay river one at a time. With these boats a bridge was swiftly and silently completed at midnight by the strenuous exertions of his engineers, and then the Nawab's troops began to cross over to the Maratha side of the Ajay. A boat in the middle of the structure broke down and sank under the weight of the passing men and beasts, and before the moving troops could be halted 1500 of the Bengal soldiers were drowned. The Nawab immediately extinguished all his lights and prevented any alarm from reaching the Maratha camp. The damage was repaired in a few hours and the crossing was resumed. By the earliest streak of dawn some 2,500 of his men had reached the south bank of the Ajay. They waited no longer for the rest of the army to cross over, lest the growing light should reveal their small number to the Marathas and defeat their attempt. Quickly crossing the intervening mile of ground, the Bengal army charged the Maratha camp with loud shouts. The surprise was complete. The Marathas rudely awakened after the fatiguing merriments of the previous night, were quite bewildered. A cry arose among them that the Nawab himself was upon them with his full force. Utter confusion raged throughout the camp. There was no fight. The Marathas fled without waiting to ascertain the strength of the attacking force or strike a blow. "There was little loss on either side", as the English factory letter reports; but the Nawab's victory was complete, the Marathas had

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to leave all their tents, equipment and property behind. In the course of the morning the Nawab pushed up reinforcements from the other side of the Ajay in boats, and himself arriving on the scene took up the pursuit of the enemy for some distance, and then came back to their deserted camp.

The blow was struck not a day too soon. For a long time before this Raghuji, then in Berar, had received no report from Bhaskar after he had gone into cantonments in Bengal for the rainy season. So the Rajah had decided to start on the *Dasahara* day (28th September) and marching by way of Deogarh unite forces with Bhaskar in Bengal. Their junction would have made the *Bargis* irresistible, but Alivardi's timely *coup* destroyed the chance of it and totally ruined the Maratha prospects in Bengal for that year at least.

Province cleared of Marathas up to Chilka lake, December, 1742.

Bhaskar fled by way of Pachet; his scattered detachments also vacated Bardwan, Hughli, Hijli and other places. But the jungle hindered the Bengal troops in pursuing him. Bhaskar then turned south and moving by way of Chandrakona raised his head in the Medinipur district, where he looted and burnt Radhanagar and other large places, making Narayangarh his base. Thence he sent a detachment to Katak, which captured that town after defeating and slaying its governor, Shaikh Masum, at Jajpur. On hearing of this development, Alivardi turned aside from Pachet towards Medinipur. The Marathas immediately retreated towards Balesar. They turned back and

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attacked the Nawab when he was four miles from Medinipur, but were routed by him. Thereafter they never again stood up to a fight, but were incessantly pursued and driven back beyond the Chilka lake into the Deccan (December, 1742.) Bengal and Orissa were thus at last totally freed from the raiders. Then the Nawab halted at Katak for a few weeks to restore its government, and returned to Murshidabad in triumph about 9th February, 1743.

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III.

Second and Third years' Maratha invasions—Safdar Jang in Patna—Peshwa marches through Bihar—Massacre of Maratha generals. 1744—Financial ruin caused by the raids.

Oudh army comes to Patna, December, 1742.

The first Maratha incursion into these provinces was beaten back by the end of December, 1742, but in the meantime an unexpected danger had threatened Bihar, which revealed the utter rottenness of the State of Delhi. At the first coming of Bhaskar, Alivardi Khan had appealed to the Emperor for help and the Emperor had ordered Safdar Jang, the *subahdar* of Oudh, to go and guard the province of Bihar, and then, if necessary, advance into Bengal. Safdar Jang had left his headquarters at Faizabad with 6,000 Persian cavalry (formerly of Nadir Shah's army) and 10,000 good Indian soldiers and a powerful artillery. Rumour swelled the strength of his troops to 40,000 men and added that he was coming with an imperial *farman* appointing him *subahdar* of Bengal. The greatest terror was felt by the people of Bihar from the ferocity and greed of their pretended defenders, as Safdar Jang's troops were quite unruly* and committed all sorts of outrages. The citizens of Patna in their alarm saw no alternative except to run away from the

* "From Patna we learn that the *Subah* of Oudh was advancing that way with 40,000 horse. It is reported that he has a *farman* for the *Subahship* of Bengal .....His people commit outrages and are under no control." (Bengal letter, 8th January, 1743).

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city or fall helpless victims to the licentious soldiery of Oudh. But the governor's agent Sayyid Hedayet Ali (the father of the author of *Siyar-ul-mutakhkharin*) waited on Safdar Jang and secured his assurances for the safety of the people.

After visting Patna city and viewing its fort (c. 7th December, 1742), Safdar Jang encamped at Bankipur, five miles west of it, and began to act as if he were already the lawful master of the province. He appropriated three good elephants and four large guns from the property of the governor, and treated the local zamindars and nobles who waited on him with great haughtiness and contempt.

Bihar vacated by Safdar Jang, January, 1743.

Alivardi, on hearing of these doings, hurriedly left Katak in order to save Bengal from a friend of such a dubious character. Both of them were Muslims and Shias, besides being servants of the same master! He wrote to Safdar Jang, saying that thanks to Providence, he did not require any *man's* help and therefore Safdar Jang need not proceed to Bengal. On receiving this letter as well as the news of Alivardi's return from Orissa and the report that the Peshwa Balaji Rao, a hereditary enemy of the house of Oudh, was rapidly coming to Bihar to aid Alivardi, Safdar Jang beat a hurried retreat from Patna. Crossing the Ganges at Munir by a bridge of boats (c. 15 January, 1743), he re-entered his own province.

Second Maratha invasion 1743.

At the close of the year 1742 the Marathas had been totally expelled from Bengal and Orissa, without having succeeded in carrying away any booty.

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But next year, at Bhaskar's call, Raghuji Bhonsle himself marched with a large army by way of Ramgarh towards Katwa (where he arrived at the beginning of March), bent upon exacting the *chauth* of these three provinces which had been promised to Shahu by the Mughal Emperor and assigned by that Rajah to Raghuji. This second invasion had been decided upon in the preceding October, after the unexpected failure of the first year's campaign under Bhaskar. To counteract it, the Emperor had appealed to the Peshwa Balaji Rao, who was the rival and personal enemy of Raghuji, and the Peshwa had agreed (as early as November 1742) to lead an army into Bengal for the purpose of opposing Raghuji.

Peshwa Balaji Rao enters Bihar, February, 1743.

Early in February 1743, the Peshwa entered Bihar from the south with a strong force, which rumour put at half a *lakh* of men. The news of his coming, though in the guise of an ally, caused the greatest consternation throughout the province. And with good reason. His army was irresistible, and "along his route those who gave him black-mail or costly presents saved their life and property, while those who attempted defence were killed and their houses were given up to plunder." (*Siyar*, ii. 129.) Patna city trembled for its life; the governor was absent, no representative had been appointed for him, and the capital of Bihar was for the time being without a responsible head. The one anxiety of the citizens was to save their families from outrage by sending their women elsewhere across the river. "Not a family of note left in the town," as the English factory reported. Happily, the Peshwa did not come to Patna; Sayyid

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Hedayet Ali had interceded with him for the safety of the city, through a mutual acquaintance, a Maratha merchant named Govindji Nayak. From Benares Balaji hastened to Bengal by way of Daudnagar, Tikari, Gaya, Manpur, Bihar, Mungir and Bhagalpur,—causing great loss and distrubance to the last two towns. Issuing from the hills and jungles on to the plain of Birbhum, he took the road to Murshidabad, while Raghuji occupied the Bardwan district with his camp at Katwa. Thus, two vast Maratha forces each under a first grade chief, were assembled close to each other in Bengal and a collision between them seemed imminent.

Interview between Peshwa and Nawab.

Alivardi issued from his entrenched camp at Amaniganj and learnt on the way that Balaji had arrived on the bank of the Ganges, 20 miles from that place. He immediately sent his *jamadar* Ghulam Mustafa with the Peshwa's envoys, Gangadhar Rao and Amrit Rao, to Pilaji Jadav, the commander of the Maratha vanguard. Pilaji came to the Nawab with these men, exchanged mutual oaths of fidelity and assurance of friendship, and then returned to his chief. The Nawab, advancing further, encamped at Lawda (7 miles south of Berhampur Cantonment) from which village Balaji's camp was only six miles distant. Midway between these two places pavilions were set up for the interview.*

* "The Maratha generals demanded the *chauth* of Bengal in Shahu Rajah's name. Bala Rao proposed a conference with the Nawab which was held on 31st March at Plassey, when the Nawab agreed to allow Shahu Rajah the *chauth* and pay Bala Rao 22 *lakhs* of Rupees for the expenses of his army,—he promising to accommodate affairs with Raghuji, who retired to Birbhum." Bengal letter, 13th August, 1743. For Balaji in Bengal, see *Akhbarat*, 25th, 26th, 29th April and 4th, 10th, 11th, 17th, 20th and 28th May, 1743, as tr. by me in *J. B. & O. R. S.* December, 1931.

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On 31st March Balaji came to the meeting place with Pilaji Jadav, Malhar Holkar and other generals, and was welcomed on the way by the Nawab who had advanced to meet him on an elephant. The two chiefs dismounted, embraced each other, and sat down in a tent to discuss the business in hand. At the end of the interview the Peshwa was sent back with a present of four elephants, two buffaloes and five horses. It was agreed that the Nawab would pay Shahu Rajah the *chauth* for the province besides 22 *lakhs* of Rupees to Balaji for the expenses of his army, while the Peshwa would effect a final settlement with Raghuji, who would not trouble Bengal in future. Alivardi could not at first provide such a large sum at once, and it was only the Peshwa's threat to march away leaving Bengal to the tender mercies of Raghuji that compelled the Nawab to make the payment.

Raghuji expelled from the province, May, 1743.

Then these two new allies set out together to expel Raghuji. The latter, on hearing of their advance, broke up his camp between Katwa and Bardwan, and fled to Birbhum. After one or two marches, Balaji told the Nawab that the Bengal troopers could not keep pace with the fleet Deccan horse and therefore Raghuji would slip away unless the Peshwa pursued him with his own cavalry alone. This was agreed to, and next day (16th April) Balaji began a rapid march, overtook Raghuji, beat him in a battle, and drove him in flight into the western hills with heavy loss of men and of much of his baggage and camp which were abandoned to plunder. Many officers of the Nagpur army also came over to the Peshwa.

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Alivardi turned back from Dignagar (32 miles south-west of Katwa) and on reaching Katwa (24th April) made it his base, dug trenches on three sides of the town, and joined them to the Ajay river, so as to guard against a return of the *Bargis*. Soon afterwards he received despatches from Balaji reporting that Raghuji had passed through Manbhum and taken the road to Sambalpur, after which Balaji had marched by way of Pachet to Gaya, where he offered the customary oblations to the souls of his dead ancestors and then took the way to Puna (at the end of May).

Condition of the country under Maratha terror.

This second *Bargi* invasion (March to May, 1743) repeated the misery of the previous year's raid, though on a smaller theatre and for a shorter time. The English merchants of Calcutta write on 13th August, 1743, "This second invasion is attended with all the unhappy consequences of the last, their route much the same, nothing but plunder and devastation ensued, several towns were burnt. The Nawab's troops also engaged greatly in plunder... An entire stop was put to (our) business for some time at Calcutta, Qasimbazar and Patna." The defensive measures at Calcutta are thus described in the letter of 3rd February, 1744: "On the Marathas' return we on 17th March (1743) ordered the batteries to be put in good order and entertained a hundred Baksaris. We raised a militia of the inhabitants on 4th April. The merchants proposed at their own expense to dig a ditch round the town to secure their houses. (The Council) agreed thereto on 29th March and lent them Rs. 25,000 on four persons' security to repay it in three months; which is completed as

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far as the Great Road that leads from the Fort Gate towards the Lake and is begun to be carried on as far as the extent of the Company's bounds at Govindpur." This was the origin of the famous *Maratha Ditch* of Calcutta. The old fort was on the site of the present General Post Office, north-west of Dalhousie Square. [Bengal letter, 3rd February, 1744.]

At Patna the *naib nazim*, Zainuddin Ahmad Haibat Jang, constructed a mud wall round the city. He ordered new walls to be raised on the foundations of the old fort and a moat to be dug round the city, the earth removed from which was to supply the materials for the wall. The unhappy city, which had barely escaped sack and massacre by Safdar Jang in December, 1742, and Balaji in February, 1743, was visited on 7th April by a natural calamity in the form of a devastating fire which made a clean sweep of two miles of habitations, from the Gorath ward to the Sehuli ward, " so that thousands of houses and thousands of animals, men, women and children, as well as household property, were reduced to ashes." (*Akhbarat*, 10th May, 1743).

Third Maratha incursion, March, 1744.

The nine months from June 1743 to February 1744 passed in peace for these three provinces, and then at the beginning of March, 1744, Bhaskar renewed the invasion of Bengal by way of Orissa and Medinipur. He was now in a fierce mood by reason of his having lost all his booty and camp property in his hurried flight from Katwa (27 Sep. 1742) in his first year's campaign, and his having been expelled bag and baggage from Bengal by Balaji in the second year (May 1743). The Peshwa

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had easily secured 22 *lakhs* of Rupees from the province, while the Bhonsle had hitherto gained not a pice in return for his vast expenditure on the Bengal adventure. Therefore, Bhaskar began his third year's raid with brutal ferocity and the Nagpur troops ranged through the country like mad dogs.

As the contemporary Gangaram writes; "As soon as Bhaskar arrived again, he summoned all his captains and ordered them, "Draw your swords and kill every man and woman that you see." When the commander spoke thus, they plundered and slew on every side with shouts of Kill! kill!! Brahmans, Vaishnavs, Sannyasis, women and cows were slaughtered by hundreds". The universal outrage committed on women by the raiders as reported by this observer has been mentioned already. A French factory letter dated 22nd Jan. 1743, N. S., records that rovers (Fr. *coureurs*) and bandits usually accompaied the Maratha army.

In their attempt to escape from such rape and slaughter, the fugitive population had to undergo unspeakable privations. Women and children, old men and youths, tenderly brought up and *parda* secluded ladies, had suddenly to abandon hearth and home and their dearest possessions and walk for many miles over rough roads and thorny patches of jungle, under the burning summer sun of Bengal, without any water to slake their thirst or the help of any conveyance for themselves and transport animal for their loads, before they could reach a place of safety beyond some large river. The author of *Chitrachampu* gives a minute and heart-rending account of the sufferings of one such large party which was escorted by the

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Maharajah of Bardwan to an asylum on an island, at the approach of the *Bargis* to his capital.

Alivardi deceived by the Peshwa—his helplessness.

Alivardi was utterly bewildered by this revival of the Maratha menace. Only a year ago he had paid a huge subsidy to Balaji on condition that the Peshwa would effect an enduring settlement with Raghuji and insure Bengal against all risk of *Bargi* raids in future. Balaji had, no doubt, driven Raghuji out of the province for the occasion (April 1743), but next year these human locusts reappeared in their myriads as before.

The reason was that in the meantime these two Maratha chiefs had met together at their king's Court (October, 1743) and Shahu had imposed upon them a compromise by which the *chauth* of Bihar was assigned to the Peshwa and that of Bengal to Raghuji, or in other words, the two provinces were merely partitioned between them as their spheres of influence; each of them simply contracted not to encroach on the other's special hunting ground, but was left free to do what he liked in his own part of the *subah*, without any moral or legal responsibility to protect the payer of the blackmail in the other parts of his dominion.

The Nawab found that in return for all his expenditure he had now got not an assured protector, but only two blood-suckers instead of one. The Peshwa's breach of his promise and callous desertion of the Nawab's cause threw Alivardi into an agony of despair and rage. Smarting under the ' Punic bad faith' of the Maratha race, he decided to use the same weapon to free his people from their intolerable tyranny. His own situation was

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well nigh desperate. The two successive years' invasions had more than half dried up his revenue, and at the same time his coffers had been exhausted by the heavy tribute that he had to pay to the Emperor on his accession,* the subsidy exacted by Balaji in 1743, the pay and bounty of the vastly increased army that he had now to maintain for the defence of the province, and the cost of the munitions and equipment consumed in the war. His Government was bankrupt, and he had to borrow money from his relatives and friends to keep his army from disbanding for long arrears of pay. His soldiers were worn out by the fatigue of campaigning every year without a break, sometimes twice a year, ever since his accession, and making long marches and fighting strenuous battles amidst every kind of hardship and privation. He himself was in ill health and unable to march out at their head. Therefore, a new campaign against the elusive Marathas in the fierce summer just then commencing, had to be avoided by all means.

Alivardi invites the Maratha generals to an interview

The Nawab took counsel with his leading Afghan general, Ghulam Mustafa Khan, who undertook to bring Bhaskar and his chief officers to a friendly interview and there massacre them, if he was pro-

* Alivardi had paid the Emperor 40 *lakhs* of rupees on account of the property of the deceased Sarfaraz Khan and 40 *lakhs* as his own *peshkash*, in addition to the annual surplus of the revenue of the three provinces (which was one *cror* of rupees acc. to *Siyar*, 107). He also presented, at his accession, 3 *lakhs* to the imperial *wazir* and one *lakh* to the Nizam, besides smaller sums to other nobles (*Riyaz*, 325. *Siyar*, ii. 107).

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mised the governorship of Bihar as his reward for the deed. Alivardi agreed, and the plan was matured in strict secrecy. Under Bhaskar there had come this year twenty Maratha generals and two Muhammadans, namely Shahamat Khan and Alibhai Qarawwal. The last named was a warrior famous in the Deccan for his valour and commanded 6,000 horse. He was now approached by Mustafa with a request to mediate between their masters and make peace. Alivardi sent Rajah Janakiram (his *diwan*) and Mustafa Khan to Bhaskar's camp at Dignagar (32 miles southwest of Katwa.) The two envoys declared that the Nawab was anxious to end these disputes by paying an annual *chauth* that may be fixed by mutual agreement and that for such a settlement a personal discussion between the two chiefs was necessary. They returned to the Nawab accompanied by Alibhai on Bhaskar's behalf to judge the situation and settle the preliminaries. This man was completely fascinated by Alivardi's speech and manners, and on going back to his leader strongly reassured Bhaskar as to the Nawab's honesty of purpose and sincere desire for peace. Janakiram and Mustafa took the most solemn oaths possible for a Hindu and a Muslim respectively that no treachery would be done to Bhaskar's party if they visited the Nawab. The Hindu *diwan* swore with the holy Ganges water and *tulsi* leaves in his hands and the Afghan general on a volume of the *Quran* as to their master's fidelity to his word. Then Bhaskar agreed to come and an auspicious day (the second day of the Bengali new year, 31st March, 1744) was fixed for the interview. During the interval, Alivardi proclaimed all around that peace had been

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decided upon and he repeatedly sent costly presents to Bhaskar, in order to lull his suspicions to sleep the more effectively.

The place selected for the meeting was the plain of Mankara, four miles south of the modern Berhampur Cantonment station. Here a huge tent was set up to serve as the audience hall. Its walls were formed by a double line of canvas screens, and in the space between them groups of strong and agile men at arms were kept concealed by the Nawab. Other tents were pitched in line with this one, and in and behind them Alivardi's officers and soldiers, elephants and horses were posted. By way of Katwa and Palashi, Bhaskar reached Mankara on 31st March. Portions of his army remained behind at Katwa and Palashi (18 miles south of Mankara.) His escort, ten thousand strong, halted a *jizail*-shot in front of the Nawab's tents, while the Bengal troops were drawn up the same distance behind the tents.

Massacre of 22 Maratha generals, March 31, 1744.

Bhaskar advanced on foot to the big tent and was welcomed at its door by Janakiram and Mustafa Khan. With him were 21 generals, the only absentee being Raghuji Gaikwad, who had always suspected Alivardi of treachery and on this day had stayed behind on the plea of illness. Besides these, there were some twenty other attendants of lower rank. The party began to walk up the carpeted floor of the tent towards the far end of it where the Nawab was sitting on a dais with his officers. They had barely crossed one-fourth of the way, when the Nawab, after satisfying himself that Bhaskar had really come, cried out, " Kill these

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wretched misbelievers!" His secret had been so well kept that such an order was quite unexpected by his followers, and it had to be repeated thrice before it was put in operation. Then the Nawab's soldiers rushed out of their places of hiding in the wings, hemmed the Maratha visitors round and after some exchange of blows cut all of them down. In the meantime, just after Bhaskar and his party had entered the tent, the Nawab's servants had thrown down the canvas screens over the door and tied them to the posts with strong ropes, thus closing the path of escape to the visitors.

As soon as the massacre began, the Nawab got out of the tent by the back door, joined his men behind it, and ordered a charge on the Maratha general's escort. His war elephant was brought there for him to mount, but with cool deliberation he waited on the ground for some time to get his shoes from his shoe-bearer (who had run away from his proper place during the alarm and confusion in the tent.) These having been found, he mounted with the remark, "Let it not be said afterwards that the Nawab was so alarmed that he had run away from the tent barefooted." When at last Bhaskar's severed head was brought to the Nawab and identified, he rode out to join in the pursuit of the enemy. These leaderless men fled without making a stand anywhere. Raghuji Gaikwad, the sole survivor of the massacre, had galloped away with his contingent at the first tumult, reached the camps at Palashi and Katwa, and quickly set off for his home with the troops present there and as much property and baggage as could be loaded quickly. Thus the Nawab's army found not a single Maratha soldier in any

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of their camps.* Their roving bands fled to Nagpur from every part of these provinces. Bengal and Orissa were thus cleared of the enemy at one blow. The Nawab distributed a bounty of ten *lakhs* of Rupees to his troops. The Emperor, at his recommendation, conferred promotions and titles on all the officers of the Bengal army.

The three eastern provinces enjoyed peace and happiness for fifteen months after the death of Bhaskar. People constantly predicted that Raghuji Bhonsle would soon return to Bengal and exact full retaliation for the murder of his generals by exterminating Alivardi Khan and his entire family. But the Rajah of Nagpur was in no position to make such an attempt immediately or effectively. His money difficulties had grown worse by now, and his old friction with the Peshwa had recurred in many a quarter in violation of the compromise effected in 1743, because even after that agreement each was trying to encroach on the other's special sphere. As a financial speculation the three campaigns in Bengal from 1742 to 1744 had brought no gain to the Nagpur Government. The result was a respite enjoyed by Bengal for more than a year after March 1744, and it was only an internal quarrel in the Nawab's realm that prevented this respite from becoming an enduring peace for these provinces and brought the Marathas back in 1745.

Nawab's money difficulties.

For the time being the Maratha menace had been dispelled, but the Nawab's Government was at its wits' end for money. The three annual raids had caused an enormous loss of wealth and shrink-

* *Siyar*, ii. 135-136, *Riyaz*, 350-352. Letter from Chandernagor to Pondichery, 12th May (N. S.), Calcutta letter to Company, 3rd August.

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age of revenue. As the Peshwa's agent at the Court of the Nawab told him in December 1746, "Raghuji, after coming to your country has plundered and destroyed ten times the value of the *chauth* of the province." At the same time, the Nawab had to increase his defensive force to an immense extent; and his army bill alone amounted to one *kror* and eighty *lakhs* of Rupees a year. The result was that bankruptcy stared him in the face and he was driven to raise money by every means fair or foul.

His exactions from the English traders.

In 1743 he had levied a war tax of Rs. 2.000 from each of the three European nations trading in his dominions, but it was a mere drop in the ocean of his need. Early in July 1744 he made "a very extraordinary demand" on the English chief of the Qasimbazar factory, "setting forth that the English carried on the trade of the whole world; (they formerly) used to have but four or five ships, but now brought 40 or 50 sails, which belonged not to the Company; that for five years he had done them daily service, but they had him not in remembrance, (and now) that he was engaged in defending the country against the Marathas, instead of assisting (him) they had supplied the enemy with powder and ball. He therefore ordered them to refrain (from) doing any business at any place, unless (they) supplied him with two months' pay for his troops, amounting to about three millions of Rupees." Three days afterwards (10th July) the Nawab set *peons* on the European merchants at Murshidabad and issued orders to all parts of the country to stop trading by the Europeans.

In their reply, the English factors denied the charge of having sold munitions to the enemy.

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In Shuja Khan's time (1731) Rs. 1,84,500 was exacted from them on a similar pretext. The Calcutta Council authorised the Qasimbazar factory to offer one *lakh* of Rupees, as their business had been stopped at Patna and Dacca also. [Bengal letter, 3 Aug, 1744.]

But the Nawab would not accept a mere *lakh* when he had demanded thirty times that amount. Hence, European trade in these provinces was well nigh stopped.

From the Bengal letter of 8th November 1744 we learn: "Horse and foot were gone to impede business at the *gara arangs* (*i.e.*, factories of coarse cotton cloth). The Nawab went on seizing and whipping every person. Preet Cotmah was tortured till he agreed to pay Rs. 1,35,000, and (was then) delivered to another tormentor to make him agree to three *lakhs*. The (English Company's) *vakils* were kept two days at the *darbar* without eating... After a time the Nawab referred the affair (of the English Company) to Chain Rai and Fatehchand (Jagat Seth), who said, "The Nawab does not expect this sum (namely, 30 *lakhs*) from the Company, but expects that they raise it among the merchants under their protection and from the number of rich persons (who have) fled to Calcutta during (these) troubles." (They added) "that the Nawab, to pay his troops, had spent the revenues of the province, his own wealth, and was forced to take money from his relations and servants, and therefore thought it highly reasonable (that) the inhabitants of Calcutta should pay a share. The military officers were impatient and daily importuned the Nawab to give (them) orders to fall on the English and the *arangs*."

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The English Company, in order to reopen their business in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, were at last (Oct. 1744) glad to beat the Nawab down to Rs. three and a half *lakhs*, besides which they had to pay Rs. 30,500 to his generals and officers in Murshidabad, Rs. 8,000 at Patna and Rs. 5,000 at Dacca. [Bengal letter, 9 February, 1745.]

Nawab's exactions from the French.

The French at Chandernagar suffered equally, considering the small value of their trade in comparison with that of the English. The fear of the Marathas caused them to evacuate their Balesar factory for a time in 1744, while their Qasimbazar warehouse was abandoned to inferior officers who merely guarded it, and at the end of 1744 they stopped sending their boats to Patna on account of the insecurity of the journey. Earlier in the same year they report "on the insatiable avidity of Alivardi Khan and his family and the horrible vexations practised in the country (for money)." In December the Chandernagar Council was faced with the Nawab's demand for one *lakh* of Rupees, which they at first hoped to reduce to Rs. 40,000, but had ultimately to pay Rs. 45,000 under the name of a loan. In 1745, their chief M. Fournier visited the Nawab, but the embassy cost them Rs. 8.000 without any gain in return. So, the Superior Council of Pondichery issued absolute orders to levy from the inhabitants of the French villages in Bengal a tax which was estimated to yield Rs. 25,000. We thus see that the pressure in the last resort passed on to the helpless Indian peasant, as is always the case.

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IV.

Civil War in Bihar, 1745—Fourth Maratha invasion—Orissa occupied by Marathas.

Afghan general Mustafa Khan quarrels with Alivardi, 1745.

A year of peace followed the extermination of Bhaskar Rao and other Maratha generals, and then in 1745 a domestic revolution turned Alivardi's strongest allies into his bitterest enemies and the divided and weak condition of the province resulting from this internal dissension lured the Marathas to renew their raids with a prospect of easy success which would have been otherwise impossible. Bengal has no indigenous race capable of the long continued exertion, the ready submission to discipline, the concerted action in large bodies, and the cool and steady fighting that are required in resisting the hardier races of invaders coming from the south or the west. War, as distinct from the mere guarding of palaces or convoys and the police protection of revenue-collectors and custom-officers, had not been the profession of any class of its people since the imposition of Mughal peace two centuries ago. Therefore, the army of the Nawabs of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, after they had become independent of the central Government at Delhi, was filled entirely with Afghans (both infantry and cavalry) and Hindu foot-musketeers of Baksar, with a sprinkling of Sayyids of Barha and other foreign settlers in Upper India and *Bahelia* musketeers from Oudh. Of these the Afghans were by far the most numerous and efficient element. Their

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proud consciousness of superiority, inborn martial habits, and strong clannish cohesion made them quite irresistible if they could be only united under one great leader.

Hitherto the Nawab's right-hand man had been Ghulam Mustafa Khan, the foremost of his Afghan officers. Mustafa's personal achievement in defeating the first year's Maratha raid and his successful *coup* in destroying Bhaskar in the third year, had raised him almost to a position of equality with Alivardi. His reputation as a brave man and veteran general was deservedly unrivalled, and he had gathered in his own command a compact body of 9,000 Afghan horsemen besides a force of infantry. His armed strength, capacity and ambition made him a formidable danger to the Nawab's throne.

Alivardi in his hour of sore need had lightly promised him the governorship of Bihar as his reward if he could murder Bhaskar; but he now shrank from the fulfilment of his promise and tried to placate Mustafa by deferring a decision and sending him only smooth messages. Mustafa was justly angry at this breach of faith. His tone became haughtier and more insistent as his heart grew sick with hope deferred, till an armed conflict between him and the Nawab seemed imminent. He came to fear the fate of Bhaskar if he attended the Nawab's Court, and therefore he kept to his own house surrounded by his retainers. Alivardi, on his part, called up the loyal troops from all sides and guarded his palace and the mansions of his relatives in full force against any sudden assault by Mustafa's army.

But some other Afghan generals, like Shamshir Khan and Sardar Khan, and even a few of the

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lieutenants of Mustafa, were won over by Alivardi's gold and favours, and Mustafa on seeing the forces gathering under the Nawab at Murshidabad, shrank from delivering an attack on him. He resigned the Nawab's service and demanded the due salary of his troops, amounting to 17 *lakhs* of Rupees, which the Nawab paid at once without holding any muster or examination of accounts, and thus promptly got rid of the menace to his throne and capital (February, 1745). The discontented general set off for Patna, determined to wrest the throne of Bihar from Alivardi's deputy Zain-ud-din Ahmad Haibat Jang. On the way he forcibly took away some guns and elephants of the Government from Rajmahal, stormed the fort of Mungir, and appeared before Patna (March 14, 1745) in open rebellion. If Alivardi could seize the throne of the three provinces from the lawful *subahdar*, Sarfaraz Khan, why should not he (Mustafa) do the same from Alivardi? He too held a conquering sword in his hand, which was the best of imperial *sanads* in that age, as he openly said, in reply to a conciliatory message sent by Zain-ud-din [*Siyar*, ii. 141.]

Patna governor's defensive measures.

Zainuddin was warned by Alivardi of the coming danger and urged to save himself by fleeing to Murshidabad by the northern side of the Ganges, so as to avoid Mustafa's route. He chose the manlier part of defending the province in his charge. Hurrying back to his capital from Tirhut, he rapidly organised a most efficient plan for guarding Patna. Calling up his detachments from the outposts and all local nobles and loyal zamindars to his side, he soon assembled about 14,000

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fighters round him. His armed camp in Jafar Khan's garden, east of Patna City, was surrounded on the land side by a ring of wooden towers (*sangar*) for musketeers, and these were joined together by curtains and continued up to the embankment for keeping out the flood from the marsh south-west of the city (called *jalla*). A deep wet ditch was dug outside this line of defence and the earth thus excavated was thrown up in the form of a rampart outside the mud and water. On the bastions guns were mounted, and sections of the walls were distributed among the different captains.

By the middle of March, Mustafa Khan's force had swollen to 14,000 troopers, partly his own retainers and partly adventurers who had gathered round him in search of employment. With him were about 50 pieces of artillery and 150 elephants; but his Afghans made little use of cannon, though they carried firelocks to the field and used them on suitable occasions. Their horses were the best available in India, the cheapest of them having cost not less than four to five hundred Rupees. Their gorgeous saddle and accoutrement and gilded armour made a splendid show.

Mustafa Khan assaults Patna City.

Arriving before Patna about two hours after dawn on March 14, 1745, Mustafa Khan halted in the numerous mango-groves south of the city. Forming his men in two divisions, each six to seven thousand strong, he sent one of them under Buland Khan Ruhela to turn the rear of the defences, while he himself led the other against the last stockade which was held by the Rajah of

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Tikari and other zamindars. The local levies broke and fled at the first charge of these compact bodies of seasoned warriors, and the Nawab's officers who made a stand found themselves unsupported except by a handful of personal friends. The field was quickly swept clear up to the position where Zainuddin himself stood thinly guarded.

Mustafa now pushed close up to him, and the Afghan's victory seemed certain, when a musket shot killed Mustafa's elephant driver, which induced that general to jump down from its back lest the uncontrollable beast should stampede to his rear and his followers interpret the movement as their general's flight. But his action in dismounting produced exactly the effect that he wanted to avoid; his men concluded that he had been shot off his elephant like his *mahut* a few minutes before; they broke and fled, and Patna was saved.

For five days and nights the two armies stood facing each other in their respective positions, merely exchanging fruitless gunfire. At last Mustafa realised that he was powerless to storm the city and camp, and began his retreat on the 21st. Zainuddin could not at first credit the news that such a great threat had passed away so easily; hence, there was no effective pursuit of the enemy. By way of Mithapur, Naubatpur, and Muhib-Alipur the baffled Afghan general retired south-westwards to the Son river. Soon afterwards Alivardi arrived at Patna and joined in the pursuit. Mustafa was now quickly expelled from Bihar and chased as far as Zamania (opposite Ghazipur). The rebel took refuge in the village at the foot of Chunar fort, which belonged to the *subah* of Oudh.

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and Alivardi and Zainuddin returned to their respective capitals in April [*Siyar*, ii. 137—146.]

Mustafa in Arrah district.

Meantime, Raghuji Bhonsle, at the invitation of Mustafa, had invaded the province, which hastened the return of Alivardi to Bengal and detained him there. This news encouraged Mustafa to come out of Chunar, just before the arrival of the monsoon rains which would make campaigning impossible for the imperialists and give him time to enrich himself by plunder. He entered the Shahabad district and reached the zamindari of Udwant Singh Ujjainia, the owner of Jagadispur, who had long been hostile to the governor of Bihar.

On hearing of this development, Zainuddin promptly issued from Patna at the head of 13,000 men, forded the Son river at Koilwar, and next day advanced 12 miles south-west by south to Karhani on the edge of the jungle of Jagadispur. Two miles beyond this village the enemy were sighted and the battle joined (June 20, 1745). Mustafa's forces and equipment had been greately depleted by his lack of money, as his Patna adventure had ended in failure and he had exhausted all his treasure. But he charged desperately. Nothing could stop him; the Nawab's vanguard was put to flight; but just then Mustafa was shot dead by a musket-ball. A servant of the Nawab mounted the rebel's elephant, cut off his head, and exposed it on the point of a spear. At the sight of it the Afghan army broke and fled to the village of Magror under the leadership of Mustafa's son, Murtaza, and other surviving officers. Thus one great danger passed away from the Nawab and

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he was free to deal effectively with another which had assailed him at the same time. This was the fourth incursion of the Bargis.* [*Siyar,* ii. 146—148.]

Fourth Maratha invasion.

When Mustafa left Murshidabad in open mutiny (*c* February 20, 1745), he wrote to Raghuji informing him of his intended invasion of Bihar and inviting him to co-operate in humbling Alivardi by repeating the Maratha raid. The opportunity was as tempting to Raghuji as it was unexpected. He immediately marched at the head of 14,000 horse to Orissa (March) and captured the city of Katak without a blow. Its governor, Rajah Durlabhram, the son of the Nawab's *diwan* Janakiram, was a timid priest-led sluggard, and his forces were quite inadequate for resistance, while the Nawab's absence in full strength in Bihar for fighting Mustafa removed all hope of succour coming from him to Katak. After shutting himself up in Barabati, the fort of Katak, for a fortnight, Durlabh-ram was so ill-advised as to pay a visit to Raghuji in his camp, where he

*Mithapur, the site of the Patna Junction Railway Station. *Naubatpur* is 13 miles s. w. of it. *Muhib-Ali-pur,* on the east bank of the Son, is 19 miles s. w. of Naubatpur and three miles s. of Mussowrah. *Koilwar* is 8 miles e. and *Jagadispur* is 18 miles s. w. of Arrah town. *Karhani* (spelt as *Khurownee* in *Indian Atlas,* sheet 103, and as *Gurranee* and *Gurrahny* in Rennell's *Bengal Atlas,* Sh. 9 and 3) is 5 m. south of Arrah and 15 m. due east of Jagadispur. *Arwal* is 8 miles s. of Muhib Alipur.

For *Magror* the printed text of *Siyar,* ii. 148, reads *Makri-Khu,* which is described as close to the Sasseram and Chainpur zamindaris and enclosed by hill passes, (ii. 151.)

There is a *Mugror,* 22 miles west of Bhabhua subdivisional town and 14 miles w. of Chainpur, and a *Kheyra* 3 miles north of Mugror. Both these places are on the banks of the Karamnasa river, in the Mirzapur district of the modern U. P. and only a few miles beyond the present south-western frontier of Bihar. (*Indian Atlas,* sheet. 103). *Makri-Khu* of *Siyar* should be corrected into *Magror-Khera.*

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and his party were all made prisoners. Durlabhram was kept in captivity at Nagpur, and it was only after paying three *lakhs* of Rupees that Janakiram could secure his son's release nearly two years later (January, 1747). The fort of Katak, however, held out under the gallant Abdul Aziz and a garrison of only 400 men. But outside its walls all Orissa up to Medinipur passed into the hands of the Marathas (April). Even Abdul Aziz at last surrendered the fort on condition of being paid his arrears of salary.

Alivardi, with Mustafa still threatening Bihar, was then in no position to undertake a campaign in Orissa. He, therefore, deemed it politic to temporise by sending envoys to Raghuji to negotiate for peace. Raghuji knew his strength and demanded three *krors* of Rupees. Alivardi prolonged the discussions for two months and a half, till at the end of June he heard of the death of Mustafa, when he broke off his delusive peace negotiations.

In June Raghuji entered the Bardwan district from Orissa. Immediately afterwards there was a great confusion throughout West Bengal and "it prevented business from going on at several *arangs*." But a month later the raiders vacated the district and removed to Birbhum to canton for the rains (July 20). Mustafa was now dead, and Alivardi was guarding Murshidabad in full strength. [*Siyar*, ii. 149—150.]

Raghuji invades Bihar.

At the end of the rainy season (October), the war was renewed. In response to repeated appeals from the remnant of Mustafa's army, which was blockaded by the loyal zamindars at Magror, and its promise to join his banners, Raghuji marched

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into Bihar. By way of the jungles of north Birbhum and the Khargpur hills (south of Mungir), he arrived near Fatua which he pillaged and burnt, and then turned south-west, plundering Shaikhpura and many villages in the Tikari zamindari, till he struck the Son river.

After fording it, he advanced to Magror, rescued the Afghans and their property, recrossed the Son at Arwal with them, and by this junction of forces gathered round himself an army of 20,000 men consisting of redoubtable Afghan fighters and swift tireless Maratha light horse.

Alivardi fights Marathas at Muhib-Alipur.

In the meantime, Alivardi had set out from his capital immediately after hearing of Raghuji's move towards Bihar. With 12,000 picked troops he hastened to Patna; but finding that city no longer in danger and the enemy gone away to the south, he halted for a few days at Bankipur, to refresh his troops and replenish his material. Then he resumed his march in regular order with a fully appointed army and powerful artillery, *via* Naubatpur, to overtake the Marathas. But the enemy kept moving in front of him, always out of gunshot, and plundering the villages along their route, till the Rani's Tank near Muhib-Ali-pur was reached, where Raghuji had his camp. Here the Nawab's vanguard under Mir Jafar surprised the Maratha Rajah, who was soon surrounded by the rest of the Nawab's forces. The other divisions of the Maratha army fought hard to rescue their master, who ultimately escaped through the sector of Shamshir Khan in consequence of that Afghan general's slackness or, more probably, his acceptance of a bribe. Meantime, Alivardi had

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come up by forced marches and now joined in the chase of the Marathas. It was during this week's fighting that two of Raghuji's officers, Mahimaji Baba and Shankaraji Baba, were killed by cannon balls on November 14 and 20 [*S. P. D.* xx. let. No. 74. *Siyar,* ii. 151—152.]

Campaign in North Bihar.

In the rapidity of his march the Nawab had far out-stripped his baggage and tents, and this brought him to a halt for some days there. His Begam—he had only one wife throughout his life —sent envoys on her own initiative to make peace with Raghuji in order to give repose to her war-weary husband. Raghuji would have gladly accepted the offer, but Mir Habib advised him to make a dash upon Murshidabad and loot the capital of Bengal which was without the means of defence during the absence of the Nawab and his army. From the bank of the Son, the Marathas doubled back towards Bengal, Alivardi hurrying at their heels and his army suffering terrible privations from scarcity of food. By way of Munir and Patna he turned towards Bengal. At Bhagalpur, on the deep stream of Champanagar, Raghuji at the head of 6,000 men turned back and surprised Alivardi, whose escort was only 600; but by severe fighting the Nawab gained time for the rest of his army to come up and drive the Marathas away.

Marathas near Murshidabad.

The Maratha Rajah, by following the jungle path, arrived near Murshidabad on 21st December, one day before Alivardi who had marched by the regular military road. During that one day the Marathas burnt the suburbs across the river opposite Murshidabad and many of the villages

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around, such as Jhapaidah and the garden of Mir Jafar. Raghuji remained in the south-west of the city for three or four days, but on Alivardi's advancing, he fell back on Katwa. At the Rani's Tank, west of Katwa, a severe battle was fought, in which the Marathas were defeated and driven back with heavy loss. Raghuji himself then went back to Berar, leaving Mir Habib with 2 to 3 thousand Marathas and 6 to 7 thousand Afghans to continue the raid.

Disorder and loss throughout the country.

The Nawab and his soldiers alike were worn out by their two hard campaigns in Bihar in the course of nine months, and had therefore to halt at Murshidabad to recuperate. No effective action could be taken against the Marathas who maintained their camp at Katwa, while their detachments roamed all over West Bengal, and even threatened Murshidabad. A party of them remained on Qasimbazar island, a few miles west of the city, throughout that January and February (1746). The miserable condition of the country during this incursion is graphically described in the letters of the English and French factories. Calcutta reported in February 1746, "The Marathas being encamped at Katwa near the *gara* (cloth) *arangs* made the weavers fly...A great scarcity of all piece-goods (has occurred) by the Marathas' return, and no one knows how long they may stay.'..The Maratha situation on the island of Qasimbazar (is) preventing all intercourse, and no goods (have been) received since these people have been there."

The French at Chandernagar tell a similar tale: "The Maratha raids have caused frightful

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disorders. Scarcity is raging, rice sells at five seers a Rupee. The famine has been followed by an epidemic which has carried off a prodigious number of workmen (*i.e.*, weavers.)...At Murshidabad they long troubled the Nawab by their continual detachments. Famine and pillage prevailed. The environs of the capital are believed to have been totally destroyed by the Marathas...When occupying the neighbourhood of Murshidabad, they detached a party who raided up to the border of the villages under Chandernagar, pillaging and massacring the Bengalis whom they met on the road without distinction of age or sex...But M. Roussel at the head of 50 soldiers expelled them after slaying 15 of their men...They have done much ravage on all their route." [Letters from Pondichery to the Company, dated January 11, 1746 and January 31, 1747, New Style].

Orissa remains in Maratha occupation.

At the beginning of March 1746, the Nawab sent a strong force under Ataullah Khan to Bardwan, who drove the Marathas out of the district, in consequence of which Qasimbazar island was freed from their menace. The Nawab himself went to Bardwan, but the enemy having been expelled from Bengal, he returned to his capital in April. Thus Bihar and Bengal enjoyed peace for a time, but Orissa remained entirely in Maratha possession. Mir Habib continued at Medinipur the whole season, and looted Hijli at the mouth of the Ganges and its neighbourhood; and in June his troops were encamped about Falta, where, as the French factors remark, "Alivardi appears to leave him to enjoy the Nawabship of Katak in tranquillity." In fact, the Nawab put off

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the reconquest of Orissa till the next cold weather, and utilised his enforced leisure at Murshidabad during the second and third quarters of 1746 in celebrating the marriage of his grandson and chosen heir, Sirajuddaulah, with the most lavish pomp.

Second Afghan mutiny, 1746.

In 1744 Alivardi had fortified the village of Godagari on the north bank of the Padma, to serve as a depot of arms and a safe refuge for his family in case a return of the Marathas should render his capital untenable for him. From Bhagwangola, a station south of the Ganges, almost opposite Godagari, food grain brought there by river boats used to be sent to Murshidabad on the backs of pack-oxen to feed the army and population of the capital. During the rainy season of 1746, Maratha roving bands interrupted the coming of grain by this route. The Nawab ascribed it to the negligence or treacherous collusion of the two Afghan generals whom he had posted to guard the roads. Their slackness in the fight with Raghuji on the Son river in November 1745 had shown how false and unreliable servants they were, and now they were said to have formed a secret alliance with Raghuji for overthrowing Alivardi and sharing the three *subahs* with the Maratha Rajah. So, in June 1746 the Nawab dismissed Shamshir Khan and Sardar Khan, his highest Afghan generals after Mustafa, with their six thousand men and ordered them to return to their homes in the Darbhanga district of North Bihar. They refused to go away before their due salaries were fully paid. When the Nawab sent a serjeant-at-the mace (*chobdar*) to tell them to wait for some time for the money, they ill treated this messenger.

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After some skirmishes they were forcibly ejected, but they next encamped at Sakrigali (the gateway between Bengal and Bihar), insisting on being paid. Finally they retired to Darbhanga, but were destined to create a revolution in Patna a year and a half afterwards.

Mughal Emperor promises chauth to Marathas.

Thus the second and third quarters of the year 1746 passed in comparative tranquillity. In October, after the rains had ceased, active operations were renewed for the recovery of Orissa. But at this time the Nawab was thrown into great perplexity. Early in November he received a letter from the Emperor Muhammad Shah announcing that he had agreed to make peace with the Marathas by promising to Rajah Shahu 25 *lakhs* of Rupees as the *chauth* of Bengal and ten *lakhs* as that of Bihar. These amounts were to be annually transmitted by the *subahdar* from Bengal to Delhi and there handed over to the agents of the Maratha king. People hoped that such a permanent arrangement would save the province from disturbances in future and restore the security of trade. [Chandernagar letter of 24 November, 1746 cited in Pondichery letter of 31 January, 1747 (N. S.); Calcutta to Company, 30 November, 1746.]

At the end of this month (November), Raghunath Jayaram, a Maratha agent at the Court of Murshidabad, demanded the *chauth* for Bihar in the name of the Peshwa,—that for Bengal having been promised to Raghuji by Shahu. The Nawab replied, "The Emperor too has sent me a *farman* about the *chauth* for Bengal, stating that the *chauth* has been assigned to the Peshwa and that his money should be sent to the imperial Court.

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I am writing to the Peshwa making my own representation [on the points in dispute.] Patna is mine, Bengal too is mine. He ought to act treating both provinces as one. The *chauth* for the two is inseparable." The Maratha envoy objected, saying, "How can the Peshwa's *chauth* and Raghuji's be considered as one and indivisible thing? The latter is your enemy; entering your realm he has plundered and destroyed ten times the amount of the *chauth*. The Peshwa, on the other hand, has been entirely your friend. He gave you armed help in the past, and since then he has been exerting himself to settle your affairs. He has done his work; you now do yours and regulate your realm. If you fully pay up the subsidy for Bihar, then there will be no delay in despatching your affairs." Alivardi closed the discussion by saying that all his trust was in the Peshwa, and that the business would be done after the Peshwa had considered the representation he was writing to him about the position of his Government. He evaded making any definite promise of payment. [*S. P. D.*, xx. let. 29 and 49.]

The inner meaning of the Nawab's policy was that he was not prepared to make a separate agreement for the Bihar *chauth* with the Peshwa, when there was no guarantee that the Peshwa on being satisfied as to his own gain would not leave Raghuji a free hand to raid and tax Bengal and Orissa, instead of defending the three provinces together,—which was the Emperor's object in promising the *chauth*. The black-mail for the entire North-eastern country must be one charge payable to one authority and not two separate amounts payable to two mutually independent enemy chiefs.

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The controversy about chauth.

The point at issue between the Nawab and the Peshwa comes out very clearly in the letters of Hingane, the Maratha envoy at the Court of Delhi, [*S. P. D.*, ii. let. 4 and 10.] Following the Emperor's *farman* to Alivardi on the agreement made with Rajah Shahu about paying to him the *chauth* for Bengal and Bihar, Hingane wrote to Alivardi and also sent to him an agent, Narasingh-das (the son of Raghunath-das, a *protege* of Haidar Quli Khan), with an oral message, to this effect: "By order of the Emperor, the Peshwa has settled the terms of peace concerning Bengal with King [Shahu] and sent word to Raghuji forbidding him to enter the province of Bengal...Write to your officers to remain in composure of mind at their posts and send the imperial revenue in full, as contracted by the Emperor, to Rajah Shahu through the Peshwa. Then the disturbances in your country will cease."

Alivardi replied to the Emperor: "Your Majesty has written to me to the above effect, and I have also received a letter from Balaji saying that in case Raghuji invades Bengal the Peshwa's captains [*i.e.*, Holkar and Sindhia] have been kept ready with their troops on the frontier of Bundelkhand to come to the Patna and Gaya districts for my defence. And yet I have been repeatedly getting letters from Raghuji to inform me that he is coming. Then, what kind of settlement is this? If a definite agreement has been concluded with Rajah Shahu, why should Raghuji come at all? And for what reason has Balaji Rao written thus? Why is not this uncertainty yet removed? So long as this apprehension remains, I, too, cannot afford

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to disband my army and my realm cannot be cultivated. The districts on the [western] bank of the Ganges have been devastated and not a *kauri* is being yielded by them. If some five Rupees are realised from this side [of the river], it is spent on my troops. Whence is the revenue coming and from what source can I send it ? In this state of things, if Raghuji or his army does not make any incursion this year, then at the end of the year my militia will be sent back to their homes, and whatever revenue is left [after discharging their dues] I shall send to His Majesty's Court."

Alivardi also wrote to the same effect to Hingane: "When terms have been settled with Rajah Shahu, why is there an apprehension of Raghuji coming here? He is the Rajah's servant; a friendly agreement has been made [with the Rajah] about this province; now call him back and restrain him. When a man like the Peshwa himself has suspicions about Raghuji invading Bengal, how can I be expected to disband my army and hope to see my country populated again? Whence can I send the full revenue to the Emperor ? Therefore, I am determined to remain prepared for war [with Raghuji.] If he comes, I shall fight him; if he does not come, I shall remit such revenue as may be collected at the end of the year. You should write to your generals that when Raghuji sets out to invade this country, they should come to Bengal by the Ramgarh, Pachet or Orissa route. What will they do by taking post in the Patna-Gaya districts ? When they hear before-hand that Raghuji has issued from Berar and is actually coming to Bengal, and have verified the

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news, they should march directly to Bengal without waiting to be summoned or written to. Then I shall join them and defeat him."

In reply to the objections of Alivardi, the Emperor wrote the following letter of reprimand, under pressure from the Maratha agent at his Court:—"Assuredly Raghuji is not going to Bengal. Why then are you maintaining an army ? Disband it and by properly reassuring your subjects cause that country to be populated fully. Why cling to your suspicions? Send the revenue here in full quittance. If there is any deficit in collection, exactly that amount will be debited from Balaji Rao's account. His subsidy (*tankha*) has been assigned upon you, and I have also asked him to realise as my collecting agent (*sazawal*) whatever surplus remains due to my Government. So, send the full amount quickly."

Hingane also reassured the Nawab in similar terms: "By a hundred thousand paths has the Peshwa confined Raghuji to the Deccan. By 19 routes out of 20 he is prevented from entering Bengal. If ever he sets out by a single [unblocked] path, then as our generals [Holkar and Sindhia] are posted on the frontier of Bundelkhand, in fear of them he will not go to Bengal. And even if he does go, they will hasten [after him] and chastise him. You remain watchful at your place and send the imperial revenue in full clearance."

In short, Alivardi chose the wiser and manlier part of basing the defence of his realm on a strong army under his own control, instead of depending upon a protective force, maintained at his cost, to be sent out by the Peshwa for supporting him in the event of Raghuji's invasion, probably after

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half the province had been desolated and plundered and his subjects kept in perpetual alarm by the palpably defenceless condition of their ruler.

Policy and plans of Raghuji Bhonsle in 1746.

We shall now turn to the state of things at the Court of Bhonsle. Raghuji after leaving Bengal and Bihar (in April 1746) came to Nagpur in September, and was beset by his creditors. Even when he received three *lakhs* of Rupees as the ransom of the deputy governor of Orissa (at the end of next December,) he repaid no part of his debt. After the *Dasahara* (13 Sep. 1746), he marched into Berar at the head of an army reduced to about 2000 *paga* and the same number of *silahdar* horse, while his son Janoji, who had been nominated to lead an expedition into Bengal, stayed at Nagpur with only a thousand men under his banners.

In the meantime, Mir Habib, dreading an attack by the Nawab of Bengal in the coming cold weather, appealed piteously to Raghuji in October,—"If your army arrives here [at Katak] soon, so much the better. If not, write what I should do." He agreed to pay a subsidy of eleven *lakhs* of Rupees to Raghuji, and Raghuji in return promised to send his troops for the defence of Orissa in the month of Kartik (October). But it was very difficult for Raghuji in his financial distress to fit out an expedition. A news-writer in his camp in Berar reported on 8th December, "Raghuji is enlisting men, but is unable to pay them in cash. He has decided to send a force into Bengal under Janoji with the contingents of some officers [named here], none of whom has actually more than 100 to 500 men under him. They expect to muster ten

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thousand, which is very unlikely". [*S. P. D.*, xx. let. 41 and 44.] Thus there was delay in the Rajah's reinforcing Mir Habib in Medinipur.

Mir Jafar defeats Maratha army at Medinipur, December 1746.

Mir Jafar, the *Bakhshi* or Army Chief of the Nawab, though appointed deputy governor of Orissa, could not march out in the middle of 1746 for expelling the Marathas from that province, as he was forced to halt near the capital for strengthening his army with the new levies ordered by the Nawab to replace the recently dismissed Afghan contigents of Shamshir Khan and Sardar Khan. At last, his ranks having been brought up to the necessary strength (about 7,500 men) and properly equipped, Mir Jafar marched into the Medinipur district in November, and after one or two minor skirmishes fought a decisive battle with Mir Habib's lieutenant Sayyid Nur, near Medinipur about 12th Dec. 1746. The Sayyid, though reported as killed in an English letter from Balesar written four days after the battle, escaped towards Katak with the broken remnant of his army, but two of his head officers were killed. South of Balesar they were met and rallied by Mir Habib, who was returning after conquering Kanika and dragging the Rajah of that place and his family into captivity The general now hastened northwards to retrieve the situation. Arriving at Balesar, about 20th January 1747, Habib encamped two miles from the town, with 8,000 horse and 20,000 foot, and raised batteries along the Bara Balang river to oppose the advance of the Bengal army. Janoji, who had just reached Katak with his own army, started northwards in order to reinforce Mir Habib.

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[Bengal let. 22 Feb. 1747, letter from Pondichery, 31 Jan. 1747 (N.S.) *S. P. D.*, xx. let. No. 29.]

At this news, Mir Jafar, thinking that he was about to be outnumbered and enveloped by the Marathas, lost heart, and without making any attempt to hold Medinipur, fell rapidly back on Bardwan, even though the Maratha advanced division which alone faced him at this time numbered only 2,000, while his own forces were four times as strong. Imagining that the entire Maratha-Afghan army under Janoji and Habib was close on his heels, he fled precipitately to Bardwan, abandoning some elephants and baggage of his army to the enemy (Feb. 1747.) Thus the year 1747 began with an unexpected reversal of fortune for the Nawab. Alivardi, on hearing of this disgraceful end to the Orissa campaign, severely censured Mir Jafar and sent up strong reinforcements to Bardwan, urging his general to make a stand there. [*Siyar*, ii. 156—157.]

Plot to murder Alivardi.

Just then the Nawab's arms were paralysed by treason among his most favoured and trusted generals. Mir Jafar (his *Bakhshi*) and Ataullah (his *faujdar* of Rajmahal) formed a conspiracy to murder the Nawab one day at their audience with him and then divide the thrones of Bengal and Bihar between themselves. Alivardi was now over seventy years of age; his intended heir was his favourite grandson, Sirajuddaulah, a mere boy of fourteen. The succession to the throne of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, therefore, became a question of the keenest personal interest to his highest-placed relatives and his most powerful officers of a maturer age, such as Mir Jafar who had married

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a half sister of Alivardi, and Ataullah Khan, the husband of Haji Ahmad's daughter (Rabia Begam). Both of these nobles had long filled important posts in the State and led armies in the field, or administered provincial divisions. Foolish favourites were not wanting to feed their ambition by prophecies of their enthronement and intrigues for their elevation. But the conspirators lacked courage and capacity; every wise man who was approached dissuaded them from their wild dream; the secret reached the Nawab's ears, and they shrank from striking the blow. Their unworthy counsellors fell under the Nawab's wrath, and in trying to protect them Ataullah was forced to resign and Mir Jafar's contingent was broken up and taken over by the Nawab. The two chiefs retired to privacy in Murshidabad for a time. [*Siyar*, ii. 157.]

Alivardi's campaign against Janoji, March 1747.

Thus Alivardi was left alone to face the united Afghans and Marathas. Mustafa Khan, Shamshir Khan, Sardar Khan and other veterans of note were gone with their forces, and now he lost the services of his two best war-experienced kinsmen and generals familiar with his troops. But nothing daunted, this old man of seventy-one personally took command of his army, marched out of his camp, and after fighting a severely contested battle near Bardwan (March 1747) defeated Janoji and the entire Maratha army with heavy loss. Thereafter the Marathas had not the heart to face him again in the field. They once more tried their old game of slipping past the Nawab's flank and making a dash upon Murshidabad in his absence. But so quick was Alivardi's return be-

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hind them that they were prevented from doing any damage to the capital, though they sacked and burnt some villages near it as usual. So, the baffled raiders fled back to Medinipur, the Murshidabad and Bardwan districts were temporarily cleared of them, and at the approach of the rainy season the Nawab returned to his capital. [*Siyar*, ii. 158.]

During the whole of this year, 1747, the Marathas remained in undisturbed possession of Orissa up to Medinipur. Their stay in and about Balesar, according to a Calcutta letter of 24 Feb. 1748, "has in a great measure prevented the currency of trade and occasioned a scarcity of all sorts of grain, the country people flying from their habitations upon every trifling rumour of their entering into this province. A body of Marathas situated at Dane's Town* having been a long time troublesome by stopping the rice boats coming to our markets,... which occasioned almost a famine in this settlement, we on 12th October (1747) sent Captain Fenwick to clear all boats with our *dastaks* (*i.e.*, passes),... which service he performed."

A Pondichery letter of 11th October (N. S.) exactly describes the condition of the province: "The Marathas have this year also made an irruption into Bengal. The Nawab has this time found it out of his power, by reason of the different checks that he has received, to chase them out of the province. They have got hold of many villages along the Ganges from Hugli up to Tambuli (Tamluk); they neither massacre nor pillage the inhabitants of the country any longer, but they exact the dues of passage from all boats without exception which ascend the river."

*Long, *Selections*, 20*n*, places it conjecturally near Diamond Harbour. Bengal letter of 30th Nov. 1746 shows that it was near Hijli.

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V.

Afghan usurpation of Patna, 1748—Battle of Rani Sarai—Nawab recovers Katak and loses it again, 1749.

Patna governor wants to enlist Darbhanga Afghans.

In October, 1747, Alivardi again made his camp at Amaniganj outside his capital and began to prepare an expedition for the recovery of Medinipur from the Marathas. But a terrible catastrophe overwhelmed his family through the selfish greed, insane ambition and treacherous violence of the Afghans of Darbhanga, which made the Maratha hold on Orissa secure.

We have seen how six thousand Afghan troops under Shamshir Khan, Sardar Khan and other generals of that race, had left the Nawab's service in June 1746 and gone to their homes in North Bihar. Zainuddin Ahmad Haibat Jang, the governor of Patna, had pressed on Alivardi the bold strategy of offensive which had led to the expulsion of Bhaskar from Katwa in September 1742 and he had also defeated the formidable assault of Mustafa Khan upon Patna city in March 1745 and afterwards (in June) had slain him in battle in the Shahabad district. These achievements gave him boundless conceit about his own capacity and he dreamt of seizing the throne of the three provinces by overthrowing the aged Alivardi, whose vast wealth and lavish gifts to his other kinsmen Zainuddin had seen with his own eyes in Murshidabad when invited to Sirajud-

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daulah's marriage. For such an enterprise there could be no better instrument than these Afghan veterans of many a former war of the Nawab and their generals who enjoyed the highest military repute through the entire province. Moreover, their hearts were sore against Alivardi and they would readily join any scheme for overthrowing him.

Zainuddin became eager to enlist these Afghans in his own army. He wrote to Alivardi that so many able-bodied and expert soldiers, fretting idly at home in Darbhanga with no means of livelihood in sight of them, constituted a formidable menace to the peace of his province. And yet it was beyond the Bihar governor's armed strength to drive them out of the province. The best solution of the problem, therefore, was to keep them out of mischief by taking 3,000 of their men and all their officers into his service, if the Nawab would meet this additional military expenditure out of the revenue of Bengal. Alivardi grudgingly consented; and Zainuddin sent his agents to Darbhanga to invite the Afghans to come to Patna and enter his army.

Afghans negotiate with Patna governor.

They wanted to know the terms of pay and service first, and were moreover not free from the suspicion that this invitation was a ruse of Alivardi to get them into his power and then crush them with ease. To settle the question more quickly and also to reassure their minds, Zainuddin asked them to come to Hajipur, opposite Patna and on their side of the Ganges. Leaving Darbhanga on 10th December, 1747, they reached Hajipur on the 16th and remained encamped there

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for a fortnight, while negotiations were being constantly exchanged with the governor in Patna. Zainuddin, blinded by his eagerness to secure these valuable soldiers and make friends with their powerful leaders, visited them in their camp at Hajipur quite unattended, and when early in January 1748 they came over to Patna and halted in Jafar Khan's garden, he ordered the guards to be removed from their path and also from his palace of Chihil satun, in order to leave no ground for suspicion in the minds of the Afghans.

Afghan soldiers murder the governor, seize and plunder Patna.

The terms were at last settled and 13th January was fixed for the ceremonial presentation of the Afghan chiefs and their retainers. During the Court held for the purpose, there was an immense and boisterous crowd of three to four thousand Afghan soldiers fully armed, under Shamshir Khan, in the street leading to the palace, while the Audience Hall (*Chihil satun*) was thronged with another band of 500 Afghans under Murad Sher Khan, who had come first and who after presenting his followers one by one, told them to take leave of the governor in order to make room for Shamshir Khan's men. At this farewell ceremony, one Abdur Rashid Khan, according to their preconcerted plan, stabbed at Zainuddin with his waist-dagger, but his hand shook so much from nervousness that the weapon had no effect. Then Murad Sher Khan started up and with one tremendous blow of his sword cut Zainuddin into two from the shoulder-blade to the pelvis.

Then followed a general assault and plunder of the governor's officers and attendants, many of

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whom were slain or wounded, some after an attempt at self-defence and others helplessly. A few escaped after being stripped of their robes and arms. The whole palace and city were now in uproar and alarm; but the surprised and outnumbered royal troops could do nothing without a leader or known plan of defence. The porters and guards fled from their posts in the harem, but Zainuddin's widow promptly closed the gates and thus saved the women's quarters from an immediate sack. No stand was made against the Afghans, who seized the murdered governor's aged father Haji Ahmad and tortured him for seventeen days to make him divulge the place of his buried treasure, till at last (on 30th January) death released him from his sufferings.* Guards were placed round the palaces of the two murdered nobles and thus Zainuddin's wife and children became prisoners. The entire city passed into the hands of the Afghans, and the people were subjected to frightful oppression and insult for the sake of extorting money. The news that a king of their own race had again risen in Afghanistan and had captured Kabul and Qandahar almost unopposed, and was advancing victoriously upon Delhi, had emboldened the Darbhanga Afghans to do these acts of violence and usurpation. They dreamt of a return of the days of Sher Shah, another Afghan of Bihar who had driven out the Mughal from the throne of Delhi and given the sovereignty of India to an Afghan dynasty once again.

*Zainuddin's limbs, hacked to pieces, were collected together and buried in the Begampura ward of the City in a plot of land purchased by him and now known as *Maqbara-i-Haibatjang*. Haji Ahmad was buried on the bank of the Ganges, close to the village of Sabalpur, a few steps from Jafar Khan's garden. (*Siyar*, ii. 162—163.)

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Pathan atrocities in Bihar.

For three months (13th January to 16th April, 1748) Bihar tasted Afghan rule. But it was a quite different type of Afghan rule from the strong orderly and beneficent administration which Sher Shah had given to the province of his birth two centuries before.

Haji Ahmad's buried treasure was dug out from beneath the stone of the Prophet's footprint where he used to keep it concealed. Sixty to seventy *lakhs* of Rupees in gold and silver coins besides jewellery were secured in his house. Zainuddin's house yielded about three *lakhs* according to popular report, but only a few thousands according to another statement. "During their few days of power the Afghans robbed and dishonoured the people of Patna to an unspeakable extent." (*Siyar,* ii. 163). On 31st January the English factors at Patna wrote that Haji Ahmad was dead, supposed to be poisoned, and that the Pathans had plundered the Dutch factory at Fatua of white cloth to the amount of Rs. 65,000; and under the date 21st February they reported that Shamshir Khan had extorted from the shroffs and other people six *lakhs* of Rupees. (Bengal letter of 19th November, 1748). The author of *Siyar-ul-mutakhkharin* whose home was in Patna gives a graphic account of the terror and suffering of the citizens from the Afghan usurpers (ii. 162—163). Salimullah writes, "The Pathans got possession of the money, property, wife and daughter of Zainuddin. They arrested Haji Ahmad, killed him with many kinds of torture, and carried off in plunder the women of his house, with money and things worth several

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lakhs. In the same way they surrounded the houses of the great men of the city and robbed them. Plunder and sack by the Ruhelas raged in the city and its environs; the life, property and family honour of multitudes were destroyed, and the signs of Doomsday appeared." (129*a*.)

Gathering of Afghan army under rebel chiefs.

After seizing the Government of Patna, Shamshir Khan encamped outside in Jafar Khan's garden, leaving Murad Sher Khan in charge of the city. Knowing that Alivardi was sure to come and call him to account for his misdeeds, he prepared himself for the coming contest by increasing his army with feverish haste and lavish expenditure of money on Afghan recruits and summoning his tribesmen from all sides to his standard. "This year Afghans swarmed out of the ground like white ants. Every day the citizens of Patna were roused by the noise of kettle-drums five or six times, and on inquiry learnt that an Afghan captain named so-and-so had come from such and such a place with his contingent of so many men to enlist under Shamshir Khan or Sardar Khan" and was marching through the town to the camp in full military pomp. (*Siyar*, ii. 162). In this way nearly 40,000 horse and a somewhat smaller number of infantry were gathered round the Afghan leaders in the course of three months,—the cavalry were almost entirely Pathans and the foot consisted of a strong body of Bahelia musketeers under a *bakhshi* of their own. In addition to these, the Marathas, then in Bengal, were repeatedly written to for coming to Patna and joining the Afghan army in an attack on Alivardi. When the news came that the Nawab was advancing from his capital towards Bihar, Shamshir

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Khan and Murad Sher Khan had the Nawab's daughter, Amina Begam (the widow of Zainuddin), and her little daughter and son taken out of their palace in Patna, placed them in a bullock cart without a roof or awning over their heads, and thus carried them in public exposure and humiliation through the streets of the city to their camp outside it. It only made the citizens condemn and curse these shameless miscreants.

Alivardi's difficulties.

The news of the tragic death of his son-in-law and brother, the widowhood and humiliation of his daughter, and the loss of the entire province of Bihar threw Alivardi into the deepest grief and depression of spirit. Life lost all its charm for him and, as he told his generals and ministers, he would gladly prefer death to a life of such misery if he perished or was defeated in the attempt to liberate his daughter and grandchildren from captivity and to punish their wrong-doers. Yet his position now was one of extreme difficulty. The pay of his soldiers was many months in arrears. An expedition against the Afghans then ruling in Bihar required a vast increase of his army, but his treasury was empty. His generals might shrink from a contest with such doughty and desperate rebels flushed with victory. The Marathas were dispersed all over Bengal, ready to swoop down upon Murshidabad as soon as the Nawab and his army would leave that capital for Patna.

Alivardi's war arrangements.

The Nawab held a council and offered everyone of his followers a free choice between staying at home or accompanying him in that dangerous

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enterprise. As for himself, he told them, his heart was set on death in honourable fight rather than bearing such sorrow and humiliation any longer. They all vowed to follow him to the death. Loans were hastily raised from far and near, and the soldiers' dues were cleared in part. Efficient arrangements were made for the protection of Murshidabad during his absence, under Nawazish Muhammad and Mir Jafar (who was now taken back into favour and re-appointed *bakhshi*, and for guarding the path of grain dealers coming from the Ganges side in the north. (*Siyar* ii. 164-165.) Fifteen hundred men from Purnia joined him on the way. In the meantime the Peshwa Balaji Rao had been appealed to for aid and was reported to be approaching Patna from the west.*

Alivardi marches into Bihar against the Afghan rebels.

On February 29, Alivardi issued from his camp at Amaniganj and marched towards Bihar. At Komrah (25 miles north of Murshidabad, on the way to Rajmahal) he was brought to a long halt, as his troops refused to go further unless they were paid more money. In the meantime, the Marathas took Thana fort (south-west of Calcutta) and a large party of them occupied Katalia, ten miles from Katwa, while Mir Habib was daily expected at Katwa with a large force. The Nawab,

*Qasimbazar factory wrote to Calcutta on 19 Feb. 1748:—"The vakils of the English have informed the Council that ten horsemen of Bala Rai have arrived at Patna to demand the reason of Shamshir Khan assassinating Zainuddin Muhammad [*sic*] Khan, when he knew that Bala Rai was coming to receive the *chauth* [which] the Nawab had agreed to pay him...The Nawab told the vakils that as Bala Rai was within a few days' march of Patna, he (the Nawab) should shortly set out for that place, he expected the Marathas would on his leaving the city be all around him."

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however, satisfied his troops, resumed his march, passed through Sakrigali (*c.* 17 March) and reached Bhagalpur. Here the Marathas under Mir Habib, who had hastened behind him from Bengal, issued from the shorter and unfrequented jungle path that they had taken, and on the *nala* of Champanagar attacked the rear of the Nawab's army, but were put to flight after doing some loss to the camp-followers. They then hastened westwards in advance of the Nawab and joined the Afghans some distance east of Patna, as also did the party of Janoji. At Mungir the Nawab halted for some days to give rest to his wearied troops and then pushed on to Barh on the Ganges, 34 miles east of Patna (*c.* 14 April).

The Afghans at Patna after inviting Mir Habib, Mohan Singh and some other Maratha officers to an interview, confined them, demanding 30 to 40 *lakhs* of Rupees as their pay, on the ground that they had been led into this rebellion at the instigation of the Marathas, who had promised to pay their expenses. The generals were released only after Mir Habib had given bankers' security for two *lakhs* of Rupees. Then the allies advanced towards Barh to oppose Alivardi. The Afghan army was about 35,000 strong; the Marathas were reported as 30,000 (*Siyar*, ii. 167), but 12,000 is a more probable number. All the artillery of Patna fort accompanied the rebels;* the Nawab's army is estimated in *Siyar*, (ii. 164) at 15,000 horse and 8,000 *barqandazes* (foot musketeers.)

*Shamshir Khan left his *diwan* Ahmad Khan Qureshi (misspelt in the Bengal Consultations as *Hamed Khan Carachea*) with 2,500 men behind him in charge of Patna. (*Beng Consult*, 8 March and 26 April, 1748.) This Ahmad was the grandson of Daud Khan Qureshi, the founder of Daudnagar. (*Siyar*, ii. 129.)

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Battle field of Rani Sarai or Kala-Diara.

Alivardi had conducted his march keeping the Ganges close on his right hand, so as to have that flank naturally protected and also to assure his water and food supply. Immediately west of the city of Barh, the Ganges divides itself into several branches, which enclose between them a vast island or group of islands, now called the "Ramnagar diara". The main volume of the river water flows through the northernmost channel, while nearly two miles south of it lies the old or deserted bed of the Ganges forming a very thin shallow stream in the dry weather. The Mughal military road from Sakrigali (the eastern frontier post of Bihar) to Patna runs close to the south bank of the Ganges and is intersected by many smaller streams, which after running northwards drain themselves into that great river.

This old bed of the Ganges has to be crossed a short distance to the west of Barh town. The ford over it was strongly entrenched and defended by the Afghan army with their big guns placed carefully in position and trained beforehand on the road by which their enemy would have to advance. But Alivardi Khan, "who in generalship had no equal in that age except Asaf Jah the Nizam" (*Siyar*, ii. 166), at the first view realised the strength of the Afghan position and took no wild chance. After leaving Barh, instead of risking a frontal attack on such a strong and prepared position across a river, he turned it by making a detour to the left, *i.e.*, south-wards and away from the Ganges and the public highway, under the guidance of a local zamindar, crossed the same stream two miles further west

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at a ford unknown to the Afghans, regained the Patna road and threatened to cut the enemy's communication with that town. This unexpected manoeuvre, which the Afghans could ascribe to nothing but magic, forced them to make a hurried change of front deserting all their guns *in situ* and running westwards to a place opposite the Nawab's new position. Thus they lost the use of nearly all their artillery,—which fact had a decisive influence on the next day's battle. That night the two armies lay facing each other. The Nawab spent it in strict vigil and precaution against surprise. Early on the following morning he cast himself down on the ground in abasement before his Maker, rubbed his forehead with the hallowed earth of the grave of Imam Husain at Karbala, and with tears in his eyes prayed to God to give him either victory or death in the coming battle.

Battle of Rani Sarai.

It was the 16th of April 1748. Alivardi advanced to the village of Rani-Sarai,* eight miles west of Barh, and marshalled his ranks on the plain. His big artillery (*top-i-jinsi*) was posted in front, the lighter pieces *(top-i-dasti)* behind these, and then came the horse and foot of the vanguard in support. As usual, the Nawab took his post in the centre.

**Siyar*, ii. 167. Rennell gives *Ranny Chock*, about 10 miles w. of Barh, on the highway to Patna, and very close to the Bakhtiarpur Railway station. *Bengal Consult.*, 26 April, records a letter from Qasimbazar dated the 23rd, reporting the news that "the Nawab had killed Shamshir Khan and Murad Sher Khan in battle at *Cullodee*". Rennell gives *Colla derrah* (Kaladiara) six miles s. w. of Barh and four miles e. of Ranny Chock. Babu Ram Lal Sinha, B. L., tells me that the village Kala-diara still stands on the south bank of the Ganges north-east of the Khusrupur Rl. stn. Salimullah (130 *a*) places the battle at Punarak, which is absurd.

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The Afghans had also drawn up their army in the customary fashion of that age. They had, however, taken advantage of the ground by adopting a novel device. Their army formed a long line of two miles or more from Rani Sarai westwards to Kaladiara, but their left wing under Hayat Khan, with some large guns, was pushed across a small stream that here runs into the Ganges, and ordered to fire on the Nawab's right wing when it would come up opposite. The Marathas could be seen on the left hand some distance behind, waiting to plunder whichever side should lose the day.

Ignoring the Maratha light horse as beneath his notice and pointing to the Afghans as "There are my enemies," the Nawab advanced upon their massed ranks. The battle began with a discharge of guns. In this Alivardi had a decided superiority, as the Afghans had abandoned most of their heavy pieces at the ford four miles eastwards the day before. At the first cannonade Sardar Khan's head was blown away. He commanded nearly half the rebel force and his death on the back of his elephant, visible from far and near, shook the men of his division. Alivardi's youthful captains were eager to charge the enemy at once, but the cool-headed veteran pulled them up short letting his musketeers do their work first. His *barqandazes* fired volley after volley into the enemy ranks crowded on the sand bank, "darkening the bright day with smoke." Seeing the enemy now really hard pressed, the Nawab ordered two officers to make a charge, but the order met with no immediate response. During this confusion the Marathas and Mir Habib's Afghans (the former re-

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tainers of Mustafa) made an attack on the Nawab's baggage in the rear, and driving a crowd of servants before them approached the centre. But the Nawab, never giving these enemies a thought, ordered his vanguard to charge the main Afghan army in front and advanced on his elephant with his guards, in support of the vanguard, his band playing the music of victory. His generals vied with one another in driving their elephants into the enemy's ranks. The engagement now became close and general all along the line. Murad Sher Khan fell back into his *howda* wounded by a musket-ball; two Nawabi officers jumped on his elephant and cut off his head. In another part of the field, during the confusion of the fight Shamshir Khan fell down from his elephant and was beheaded on the ground. The Afghan army now helplessly broke and fled; the Marathas also quickly disappeared from a field where they had contributed nothing to the fight and found no chance of securing booty. The Nawab's victory, was complete. He occupied the enemy's deserted camp, and then marched to Baikunthpur, 12 miles west of the battlefield, where he halted for a few days, and finally entered Patna in triumph. A great cloud of terror was lifted up from the hearts of the people of Patna, high and low alike, and life returned to their bodies, as it were.

Alivardi halts at Patna for six months, 1748.

He consoled his bereaved daughter and other relatives, restored the administration of the province and in a most generous spirit of chivalry sent away with every care and honour the widow and daughter of Shamshir Khan, who had been captured, to their homes, even giving them some

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villages for their livelihood, as he did not make war upon women. One day before this battle the Emperor Muhammad Shah had died at Delhi. Alivardi passed the next six months in Patna trying to make some satisfactory arrangement for the Bihar governorship and watching the course of events at the imperial Court, the policy of the new Emperor and his ministers towards the *subahdar* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and the movements of Ahmad Abdali, who was expected to make an incursion into India during this change of rulers at Delhi. After appointing Sirajuddaulah as absentee *naib nazim* of Bihar, with Rajah Janakiram as his deputy and acting ruler, the Nawab left Patna about 6th November and arrived at Murshidabad on the last day of the month [*Siyar*, ii. 171; French factory letter of 10 September 1748 (N. S.); Bengal letter, 22 December, 1748.]

English merchandise looted at Katwa

The contemporary factory records describe the deplorable condition of these provinces during the Pathan usurpation of Bihar. The news spread over the land that dismemberment had begun in the Nawab's dominions, his authority had ceased, and there was none to enforce order or control the realm. Lawless men raised their heads everywhere without any fear of check or punishment. The Qasimbazar factors wrote at the end of January that there were "many straggling bodies of forces about the country under no kind of government" and that plundering went on daily. Next month the report was that the Marathas were dispersed in large parties about Murshidabad to Bardwan and all the western country. (Bengal

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letter, 24th February). On 15th February the Qasimbazar factory despatched a fleet of boats laden with the Company's goods (mostly raw silk) to the value of Rs. 3,95,031 and private treasure and merchandise worth Rs. 35,000, to proceed to Calcutta in charge of Ensign English and a small party of soldiers. His way lay by Katwa, which was then the chief station of the Marathas and where Janoji was present in person. At the same time the Nawab was sending Fath Ali Khan with a large force towards Katwa to expel the Marathas. But the Ensign, instead of waiting for a day or two at Palashi (above Katwa) either to call up reinforcements from Qasimbazar or to seek the escort of Fath Ali's army, blindly pushed on his course. Arrived off Katwa, he with equal foolishness, trusting to the assurances of the Marathas, went with the fleet out of deep water to the shallow bank commanded by the Maratha force. Worst of all, leaving his *budgerow* and soldiers behind, he landed alone to treat with the enemy, thus putting himself helplessly in the power of the Marathas, who plundered the goods and treasure in the fleet without any opposition from the escort (17th February.) Thus a heavy loss fell on the Company and its servants. The Calcutta Council declared the Ensign's conduct as imprudent and unbecoming an officer, put him in prison on his return, "took away his commission and broke him at the head of the military." The injury to the Company's prestige from this incident was even greater than the money loss; the Calcutta Council wrote, "Since what has happened at Katwa the Marathas may grow less timorous of European valour." (Bengal Consult., 25th February 1748). How very afraid the Marathas were of the handful of Europeans in

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Bengal is well described and the reason for it is given by Khwajah Abdul Karim Kashmiri in his *Bayan-i-waqai* (p. 201 of my ms.)

When the English Company sent a deputation to wait on Janoji and ask for the reparation of their loss, the Maratha prince replied that if he had been appealed to in time he could have detained and restored the English merchandise, but the inmates of the boats when brought before him as prisoners never mentioned that they were the English Company's men; it was too late now, as the plundered silk had by that time been dispersed among many men and in divers places. He, however, promised to make an endeavour to recover the goods when he would reach Bhagalpur on his way to Patna. But he could effect nothing as the raw silk had already been sold by the plunderers. The Bengal factors wrote to the Bombay Council to move Rajah Shahu for enforcing the restitution of the goods or payment of damages. It was a vain hope.

At the approach of Fath Ali's detachment, the Marathas left Katwa, carrying everything away from thence. For some time after, their main body remained near Bardwan, while several straggling parties of them were scattered about the country. (*Bengal Consult*, 25th Feb., 8th March, 1748.) But on the Nawab leaving his capital for Patna (29th Feb,), they returned to Katwa, a large party of them being reported at Katalia, ten miles from that town, in a factory letter of 14th March. They also captured Thana fort near Calcutta. However, soon afterwards the entire Maratha force in Bengal hastened to Bihar to join Shamshir Khan, especially as the Peshwa was reported to be on his march

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to these eastern provinces to support Alivardi Khan, as he had done in 1743.

After the crushing defeat of his Afghan allies at Rani-sarai (16th April), Janoji with Mir Habib and all their troops slipped past the Nawab and turned towards Murshidabad. But on the way he heard of the death of his mother and himself with a few men took the road to Nagpur, sending Mir Habib with the bulk of the troops towards Medinipur. After Janoji's arrival at home Raghuji sent his younger son Sabaji* with a Maratha force to strengthen Mir Habib.

For a year after the victory of Rani-sarai, Bengal and Bihar enjoyed a respite from the *Bargi* visitation; but Orissa from Medinipur southwards remained in the undisputed possession of the Marathas. The recovery of Orissa was the task which the Nawab set before himself for the next year, 1749.

Alivardi defeats Mir Habib.

About the middle of March, 1749, Alivardi went to Katwa and there began to assemble an army for the Orissa expedition. Some months before this he had detached a column, eight thousand strong, to Bardwan to block the usual road of the Marathas from the south. When the Nawab himself reached Bardwan, the men of his portable artillery (*topkhanah-i-dasti*) mutinied for their arrears of pay and created a tumult. The Nawab in anger dismissed them all and set out against the enemy without any artillery whatever. A few of

*Siyar, ii. 175, wrongly calls him *Manaji*. But Raghuji had no son named Manaji. *S. P. D.* xx. let 55 mentions Sabaji Bhonsle as returned from Bengal to Nagpur in 1749.

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his officers also ran away at this time, to avoid the hardship and dangers of campaigning in that barren country in the hot weather. But nothing daunted, Alivardi, now 73 years old, advanced towards the enemy in Medinipur. At the news of his approach, Mir Habib set fire to his encampment and fled southwards. The Nawab, without entering the town of Medinipur, skirted it, crossed the Kansai river, and halted on the further side. Then getting intelligence of the enemy being present in the jungles of Medinipur, he sent a detachment which made a night attack and routed them.

Alivardi recovers Katak.

Alivardi continued the pursuit. Advancing to Balesar* he learnt that Sabaji and Mir Habib, finding their soldiers powerless to stand up to a fight with the Nawab's forces, had fled far away through the jungles of Katak. Alivardi pushed on towards Katak, crossed the two branches of the Baitarani river at Bhadrak and Jajpur, and took post at Bara† about 36 miles north of Katak. Here he received letters from Sayyid Nur, Sarandaz Khan and Dharmadas (the Captain of the musketeers), who had gone over to the Marathas and had been left by them in charge of the fort of Barabati and the district round Katak town, offering to submit to Alivardi whenever he would arrive there.

*In Long's *Selections*, No. 30, the year should be 1749 and not 1748 as printed. On 5th May 1749, the Marathas under Nila Pandit were encamped close to the Balaramgarh factory at the entrance of the Balesar river, while the Nawab's forces were three *kos* off. On the 7th, as the Maratha horse entered the city to plunder the English factory, the Nawab appeared and immediately sent part of his troops over the river, who overtook the Marathas and drove them away.

† So spelt in Siyar, ii. 176. But Thorn's *Memoir of the war in India*, p. 264, mentions, "In order to complete the subjugation of the province of Cuttack, Lt. Col. Harcourt (in October, 1803) detached a corps to occupy the defile of *Bermuth*, which forms the only entrance into the province through the chain of mountains which separates it from the States of the Berar Rajah".

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But the Nawab was too old a general to act in heedless haste. He first searched the dense jungle for Mir Habib for some time; but no trace of the Marathas having been found, he issued from the jungle, left a force to watch the pass leading out of it, and with 2,000 men made a forced march from Bara to Katak, riding all that night and half of the next day, suffering terribly from the heat of the May day sun along a treeless road. At the end of eighteen hours of continuous exertion, with his escort reduced to three hundred worn-out horsemen, the Nawab arrived before Barabati at noon (*c.* 17th May, 1749). No baggage or tent had been able to keep up with him. The garrison agreed to capitulate the next day.

Next morning, when the officers of the fort came to interview the Nawab, Sayyid Nur and Dharmadas were made prisoners by previous order of Alivardi, while Sarandaz Khan who resisted arrest was cut down. The garrison shut the gates and showed fight, and so the Nawab had to invest the fort. He entered the city of Katak (*c.* 18 May), and fifteen days later received the surrender of Barabati. Thus, the reconquest of Orissa was complete. But to the ruler of Bengal Katak was easier to conquer than to hold, with the Marathas permanently in occupation of its southern and western flanks, innumerable tracks through the jungles leading out of these places, and a single long and difficult route connecting Katak with Bengal which was closed by floods during half the year. Noble after noble declined the governorship of Orissa offered to them by the Nawab, as they knew that with the small provincial contingent they would not be able to hold out against the

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Marathas for a week after the Nawab had set out on his return to Bengal with his army. At last a thoughtless beggar named Shaikh Abdus Subhan, who was serving in Durlabhram's squadron, jumped at the prospect of becoming a Deputy Nawab, and was appointed governor of the province. Alivardi quickly left Katak and hastened towards Bengal, in order to avoid the coming rainy season which would render the innumerable streams across his path impassable.

Katak reconquered by Marathas, June 1749.

But the result was as every body had foreseen. Six or seven days after Alivardi had marched out of Katak, Mir Habib reappeared before that town, defeated and captured the seven days' *naib-nazim*, who, however, fought most gallantly against tenfold odds and was severely wounded,—and so the Marathas recovered the capital of Orissa. Thus, Alivardi's work was undone within a week. But the Nawab was in no position to return to Katak and expel the Marathas. His troops had been suffering unspeakable hardship and privation in their homeward march. The June sun was fierce overhead, with no avenue of trees along the roads; then the monsoon burst and it rained heavily day after day, the *nalas* across the road turned into raging torrents; no food could be procured locally. Under such circumstances, the draggled Bengal army reached Balesar on 6th June. It was in no condition or mood to face a new campaign and repeat this labour of Sisyphus. The Nawab's health was breaking down under his recent exertions. So, he set his face homewards, and reached Murshidabad at the beginning of July. [*Siyar*, ii. 176—178; *Beng. Consult.*, 24, 27 and 29 May, 17 June ,1749].

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VI.

Alivardi's last efforts 1750-1751—Siraj assaults Patna city—Peace treaty, Orissa assigned to Marathas—Maratha conflict and negotiation with the British for chauth and sale of Orissa.

Alivardi seriously ill, July 1749.

Alivardi's reconquest of Orissa in the summer of 1749, coming so soon after his recovery of Bihar in April 1748, was a splendid achievement, but it was destined to be his last. The forced march that ensured the fall of Katak without a blow, the blistering sun that had to be endured overhead for weeks together, the muddy roads and rain-swollen streams that had to be crossed, and the scanty and coarse food that a poor jungly province solely yielded, all told upon the body of an old man of 73 who had scorned delights and lived laborious days throughout a long life, and had almost every year since his accession had to meet and defeat some enemy at home or abroad, from the bosom of his family and the circle of his lieutenants as much as from across the frontier. Soon after his return from Orissa, the Nawab had a serious illness which continued well into October 1749. (*Bengal Consult,* 18 Oct. 1749).

But there was no rest for Alivardi. On recovering from this illness, he disported himself, for a few days, by deer hunt at Mihirpur (24 miles due east of Palashi), and then marched to Katwa. After assembling his army here, he advanced *via* Bardwan to Medinipur (December, 1749). Meantime, Mir Habib had come to Balesar about 15th October, with Mohan Singh and the Maratha force,

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while the Pathans (under Mustafa Khan's son Murtaza) who formed his rearguard, arrived two days later, making a total of 40,000 men (*Bengal Consult.*, 26 Oct. 1749).

Nawab forms cantonments at Medinipur.

This year Alivardi decided to form a permanent cantonment at Medinipur, so as to keep the path of Maratha raids into Bengal from Orissa always closed. He encamped outside the town on the level bank of the Kansai river, and sent a detachment under Sirajuddaulah to Balesar to drive away the Marathas. This was that young prince's baptism of fire, but the real work was done by his vanguard, at whose approach the Marathas fled away. The Nawab doted on his grandson, quickly recalled him, and he himself advanced to Nararayangarh to meet and, if necessary, protect him. The two then fell back on Medinipur (January, 1750) (*Siyar*, ii. 179).

In the camp at Medinipur the Nawab tried to check abuses in his army, with the consequence of alienating his troops. There was gross peculation through collusion between the captains and the pay-clerks. A muster was held when it was found that in general only one-fourth of the troops paid for by Government were actually kept in service. In one officer's command the robbery of public money was so outrageous that out of the 1,700 men for whom he had been drawing pay regularly year after year, only eighty were really present and all the rest were "dead musters". When the Nawab cut down the allowances of the officers to the actual strength of their contingents, they became highly discontented, and the reform had to be stopped. (*Siyar*, ii. 180.)

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Maratha raid on Murshidabad checked.

While this internal trouble was raging in the Medinipur cantonment, towards the end of February 1750, a body of several thousand Marathas slipped past him and plundered the country as far as Rajmahal, whence they turned towards Murshidabad. About 6th March Mir Habib at the head of 12,000 horse arrived four miles from that city, and had a skirmish with Mir Jafar's troops, who were driven back nearer to the capital. For some days the two armies lay facing each other, but the Marathas continued to send out parties daily to burn and plunder all around them. (Qasimbazar factory letters, 4th and 9th March 1750.) At this news, Alivardi quickly fell back from Medinipur to Bardwan, but on hearing of his march the raiders turned aside and took refuge in the jungles of West Bengal. The Nawab halted at Bardwan, in diwan Manikchand's garden outside the city, for some time, and then returned to Medinipur (April 1750.) The baffled Marathas had shown themselves here, but disappeared before the Nawab's arrival. Permanent quarters for the officers and men and mansions for the Nawab were now built here and the ladies of the harem were summoned from Murshidabad, as no officer would undertake the perilous post of *faujdar* of Medinipur and the Nawab was therefore compelled to stay there in person.

Sirajuddaulah assaults Patna city, June 1750.

But a fresh trouble was brewing for Alivardi. His darling grandson and intended heir, Sirajuddaulah, was instigated by Sayyid Mahdi Nisar Khan (the paternal uncle of the historian Ghulam

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Husain and a discontented ex-officer of the Nawab's army), to make a dash on Patna, seize the government of the province from the Nawab's agent, and make himself independent. The foolish and capricious lad, took leave from the camp at Medinipur, on the pretext of visiting the palaces and gardens at Murshidabad, and slipped out of that town with his wife. Arrived at Patna, he with Mahdi Nisar Khan delivered an attack on the city. The defenders hesitated to fire on their future master and the apple of the eye of their present sovereign. Some of the assailants got inside through an old drain for rainwater near the western gate, called the *khirki* of Begampura, threw the gate open and admitted Sirajuddaulah. In the fighting in the narrow streets of Hajiganj the loyal troops were steadily driven back and Siraj's followers seemed to be on the point of capturing the entire city, when first Amanat Khan, then Mirza Madari Beg Deccani, and finally Mahdi Nisar were killed. At this fall of their leaders the rebels lost heart and fled out of the city. Siraj took refuge in a private house safe and sound, to the intense relief of Rajah Janakiram and the garrison of the city, (c. 27 June, 1750.) [*Siyar*, ii. 182-185].

Alivardi falls ill again, July 1750.

Meantime, immediately on hearing of Siraj's flight from Murshidabad towards Patna, Alivardi had started from Medinipur after him, though the rainy season had begun and the roads were becoming impassable. Halting only one day at Murshidabad, he hastened to Bihar, and when arrived at Ghiyaspur (midway between Barh and Fatua) heard of the attack on Patna and Siraj's defeat.

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With infinite tenderness he soothed the mind of the young rebel and restored him to all his favour, and then set off with him back to Murshidabad. At Patna the old Nawab was seized with a high burning fever, but he could not stop there, in view of the threat of the Marathas to Medinipur and the incompetence and cowardice of the agents left by the Nawab there. So, the sick Alivardi glided down the Ganges in a boat, attended by physicians, and after reaching Murshidabad and undergoing further treatment recovered (in September.)

All this time despair and consternation had been raging in the camp at Medinipur. The Nawab's illness was believed to be fatal in view of his extreme old age. Even when the news of his recovery arrived none would credit it, they regarded it as a fabrication of plotters. In proportion as the Bengal army was depressed, the Bargis exulted. In fact, Mir Jafar and Rajah Durlabhram, who had been left by the Nawab in command at Medinipur, were utterly incompetent and thoroughly shaken in spirit by their previous unfortunate encounters with the Marathas. The situation at Medinipur became so critical, that the Nawab had to set out for that place soon after his recovery from the fever, though he was still weak and far from having regained his normal health (December 1750). Here he fought Mir Habib and drove him into the western jungles. After some pursuit the enemy were compelled to flee towards Katak. The Nawab then returned to Katwa (February 1751), putting off the recovery of Orissa to the next winter.

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Peace negotiations with Marathas, 1751.

Both sides were now eager for peace. Mir Habib and the Marathas realised that it was useless to continue such a harassing war, which brought them no ultimate gain. Raghuji was more involved in debt than ever before; as a financial speculation his invasion of the eastern provinces had failed. Even Orissa, which he had now been occupying for some years, was such a poor province and the Maratha occupation of it was so often interrupted by their expulsion from it, that his income from the conquest had not covered his expenses. When in 1749 his son Sabaji beat a hurried retreat from that province to Nagpur, his soldiers pressed Raghuji hard for their heavy arrears of salary, and the Rajah had not the means of satisfying them or any other creditor. [*Select. Pesh. Daft*, pt.20, letter 55, Raghuji to Tara Bai (?), 19 November 1749 (?)] A friendly arrangement with the Nawab would give the Marathas an assured income without the expense of collecting it fitfully and by force.

Alivardi Khan was now 75 years old, and felt the weight of age and the approach of death. His troops were thoroughly worn out by their incessant campaigns and forced marches against domestic and foreign enemies; his subjects in Western and Southern Bengal had been utterly impoverished by the yearly raid and destruction of the Bargis. His Government was wellnigh bankrupt, and both he and his subjects required years of peace to recuperate. So, he listened to his well-wishers and permitted Mir Jafar to act as an intermediary and open peace negotiations with the Marathas, (March 1751.) Mir Jafar sent two

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of his men to Habib, who welcomed the proposal and despatched his own agent Mirza Salih with the Bengal envoys to Mir Jafar, who introduced him to the Nawab, then at Katwa. The party proceeded in the Nawab's train to Murshidabad where the terms were settled. The draft treaty was referred to the Court of Nagpur and finally in May or June 1751 a peace was signed on the following conditions:

Terms of the treaty.

(1) Mir Habib would now become a servant of Alivardi and act as *naib-nazim* (deputy governor) of Orissa on his behalf. He should pay the surplus revenue of the province to Raghuji's army as their salary.

(2) From the Bengal revenue twelve *lakhs* of Rupees a year would be paid to Raghuji as *chauth* for that province.

(3) The Maratha Government agreed not to set foot in Alivardi's dominions again. The frontier of Bengal was fixed at and including the river Suvarnarekha* near Jalesar, and the Marathas bound themselves never to cross it again. Thus the district of Medinipur was once more joined to Bengal. (*Siyar*, ii. 188).

Murder of Mir Habib, 1752.

Now at last Mir Habib, after long years of ceaseless toil, bloodshed, plunder and devastation of these provinces, attained to his life's ambition; he became the master of a province. But he did not long enjoy his new power and dignity. In his speedy and tragic downfall the author of *Siyar-ul-mutakhkharin* sees the hand of divine justice.

*Misprinted as *Sona-makia* in *Siyar*, ii. 188.

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As he writes, "When poor Mir Habib, after so much exertion was on the point of eating the fruit of the tree of his oppression, he was seized with retribution for his cruelty to the innocent multitudes who had been ruined in the raids of his troops and the Marathas, and he passed away in irretrievable disappointment and loss." (ii. 190). A year after the conclusion of the peace, Janoji arrived at Katak as his father's representative and took charge of the Maratha army. The Maratha Brahmans were chafing under Mir Habib's rule, and refused to take their orders from him any longer as he was now Alivardi's officer and not Raghuji's. Habib as a good administrator could not have allowed the extortion and peculation dear to Maratha officers in a newly conquered province, and his honesty and care for the people made him hateful to these blood-suckers. They pressed Janoji to call upon Habib to render an account of the income and expenditure of the province and of the division of the *chauth* of Bengal between the Maratha and Afghan soldiers, during his fourteen or fifteen months of stewardship. Janoji agreed, as he could not brook a rival to his authority in the person of Alivardi's agent. So, a plot was formed to get rid of Habib. Janoji invited Mir Habib and his chief followers, to the number of 40 or 50, to his tent, conversed with them pleasantly for the rest of the day, and about sunset took leave to go out and perform his evening *puja*. Immediately afterwards, the Maratha soldiers crowded into the tent, encircled Mir Habib, and told him that he would not be allowed to leave the tent before he rendered accounts and gave bonds for the money that he had misappropriated. Habib argued with them for sometime, and

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then at last realised that the whole thing was a plot for killing him. So, about midnight he and his followers drew their swords and tried to cut their way through the Marathas, but were all killed,* (24 Aug. 1752.)

How Orissa became a Maratha province.

Mir Habib was succeeded by Musalih-ud-din Muhammad Khan, a courtier of Raghuji, as *naib nazim* of Orissa. But though legally a representative of Alivardi Khan, he acted in all matters as a servant of the Maratha Rajah, and had no real control over the administration such as Habib had exercised. (*Siyar*, ii. 190). Thus, in a few years Orissa passed entirely out of the hands of the *subahdar* of Bengal and Bihar, and became a Maratha province. This was the one permanent result of the Bargi invasions. Another was that the Marathas showed the way for the organised looting of Bengal and Bihar to the up-country robber bands calling themselves *sannyasis* and *faqirs*, whom it required the genius of a Warren Hastings to suppress.

It is a mistake to say that Alivardi ceded Orissa to the Marathas. The terms of the treaty of 1751 clearly show that the province was divided into two parts; of the northern and more civilised corner, which included the important cities of Medinipur and Jalesar, he retained full possession

*We get this exact date (4 Sept., New style) in a French factory letter, Chandernagar to Masulipatam, dated 11 Oct. 1752 (N. S.), *Correspondance du Conseil de Chandernagor avec divers*, ii. 435.

Therefore, *Siyar*, ii 188, is wrong in saying that the treaty was signed at the beginning of 1165 A. H. (which commenced on 9th Nov. 1751), because on the next page it is stated that Habib was murdered one year and a few months after the conclusion of this peace.

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and government; the southern and more sparsely populated portion, including the great trade centre of Balesar, the capital Katak, and the holy city of Puri, was to be governed by his own officers, but its revenue was assigned to the Marathas, or in other words it became one vast *jagir* for them without any change in its territorial sovereignty. This was the theory; but in practice, the weakness of Alivardi's successors, the revolutions at the Court of Murshidabad, and the confusion attending the transfer of real power from the titular Nawab to the English Company, all enabled the Marathas to turn their fiscal right over Orissa into full political sovereignty and to annex it to their kingdom of Berar.

First, after the death of Mir Habib (1752), the new deputy of Alivardi in the province was selected from among the officers of the Court of Nagpur. This man, Musalih-ud-din Muhammad Khan, by his previous associations and weakness of position, yielded to the Marathas in all matters, so that the latter had their way in everything even under the nominal suzerainty of Alivardi over the province. The change that took place in the political status of Orissa is thus clearly set forth by the Select Committee of Calcutta on 11 December 1761:

"*It* is about twelve years since the Nawab of Bengal gave the Marathas an assignment upon the Katak province for receiving an annual stipulated sum on account of the *chauth*. The Marathas, under pretence of collecting their share, usurped by degrees the entire possession of the province, and not contented with that, still continued to harass the neighbouring parts of Bengal, and more particularly the provinces (*i.e.* districts) of Medini-

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pur and Bardwan, which now belong to the Company. " (Long, *Selections*, i. No. 572.) Mir Qasim, the only strong Nawab after Alivardi, clung to his theoretical sovereignty over Orissa. As he wrote to the English in a letter received on 10th March 1761, "It is unjust that the Marathas should receive the whole revenues of Katak". (*Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, i. No. 1006.) The Nawabs of Bengal, for ten years after the treaty, continued to appoint *faujdars* at Balesar, though these officers were frequently harassed by the Marathas.

Later friction between Nawab and Marathas.

Thus, one source of friction remained open. Another was that the Marathas could never forget that the entire *subah* of Orissa as defined in the geography of the Mughal empire had not been ceded to them, but its northernmost district Medinipur was retained by the Nawab, and that district was a very convenient half way house for raids into Bengal and Bihar. It, therefore, became the ambition of the Marathas, especially after the battle of Plassey had publicly demonstrated the weakness of the Nawab's Government, to try to seize Medinipur as their legitimate due. This brought them into conflict with the English, who had now become guardians of the Nawab's territory.

Controversy about chauth.

A third cause of disagreement was the *chauth* of Bengal, twelve *lakhs* of Rupees a year. This was paid annually to the Marathas by the Nawab's Government up to 1758. As the Bengal Consultations record on 10th April 1759, "If we are rightly informed, the *chauth* has been duly paid

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the Marathas." (Long, *Selections*, i. No. 390). The English having now taken charge of the defence of Bengal, withheld the *chauth* and opened negotiations with the Court of Nagpur for a guarantee that if the money was paid no part of the Nawab's dominion would be troubled by a Maratha force. As that Court could give no really effective assurance, the *chauth* was not paid for some years after. This led to angry diplomatic protests and threats of invasion on the part of the Marathas, and even a few incursions into the Medinipur and Bardwan districts during the interregnum between the downfall of the Nawab's independence and the open assumption of the Government of Bengal and Bihar by the English. A detailed study of the history of these provinces from 1759 will make this point clear.

Maratha incursions renewed.

Alivardi had made the treaty of 1751 with the Marathas in the hope of giving peace and security to his subjects, but it did not immediately put an end to their misery. In the very year that the treaty was signed, the rice crop of Bengal totally perished in consequence of the failure of rain, and a terrible famine desolated the country. The French factory at Chandernagar had great difficulty in procuring rice for their ocean-going ships. (*Correspondance du Conseil de Chandernagor avec divers*, ii. 435.) True, all large scale invasions of Bengal and Bihar ceased, but Orissa remained the prey of roving bands of Marathas, under no control of their king. Thus, in January 1753 we find the weavers at Balesar complaining of the great scarcity of rice and provisions of all kinds occasioned by the devastations of the Marathas, who,

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six hundred in number, after plundering Balesar had gone to the Nilgiri hills. (Long, *Selections*, i. No. 110, Bengal Consult. 1 Feb. 1753.)

Interference from the Peshwa's side in the Maratha claims on Bengal aggravated Raghuji Bhonsle's difficulties towards the end of his life. On 21 January 1754 (?) he writess to Sadashiv Rao Bhao: "Raghunath Rao (*i.e.* Raghava) has sent his envoy from Hastinapur to Bengal, with a letter for Nawab Alivardi Khan, asking him to send the *chauth* of Bengal for (the last) three years to him. Hence, he is quarrelling in my jurisdiction. You yourself settled the peace with Bengal, and yet his *wakil* has gone and disturbed my administration. Please write to forbid him and also tell Alivardi to act in the terms of the treaty signed." (*Selec. Pesh. Daft.* Pt. 20. No. 77.) Raghuji died on 14 Feb. 1755, and not as Grant Duff asserts, (ii. 74); in March 1753 Janoji succeeded him, but the royal house of Nagpur soon fell into extreme poverty. (*S. P. D.*, xx. 80, 103 and 104.)

When the *chauth* began to fall into arrears from 1759, the Bardwan and Nadia districts were again overrun by the Marathas, and revenue collection by the English officers and the Bardwan Rajah's agents alike was stopped. In February 1760 we read of "Nagars and Marathas having advanced into the Bardwan and Krishnagar countries and commenced plundering, which has obliged Messrs. Watt and Howitt to retire to Calcutta, and will totally put a stop to the collection of the *tankhas* in those countries." Even Qasimbazar was alarmed at the news that the Bargis intended to proceed to that city. (Long, *Selections* No. 446.) Clive

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had left the country on 5th February 1760, and his absence emboldened the raiders. For three months about the middle of the year 1760 the Marathas remained in the Bardwan Rajah's territory, burning, plundering and laying waste the whole country. The Rajah wrote in August, "Now they are gone, but the inhabitants have not yet returned; they have lost almost all they were worth." (Long, *Selections*, i. 491.) Early in November, four to five hundred Marathas arrived at Balesar, and defeated and carried off Mir Abdur (Rahman Khan, the Nawab's *faujdar* of the place. *Ibid.*, No. 509.)

Sheo Bhat, Maratha governor of Orissa.

Sheo Bhat Sathe, the Maratha governor of Orissa, was a man of restless enterprise and daring ambition. In December 1760, he burst into Bengal and made a dash towards Mungir, passing through the Bardwan and Birbhum districts, the Rajahs of which were suspected of having joined him. This flying column could not go further nor stay long there in fear of the English. Falling back on Medinipur, Seo Bhat invested Mr. John Johnstone, the English collector of the place, on 22nd January 1761. Johnstone and his sepoys were hard pressed, "surrounded by a numerous army, without a friend to help us", as he wrote on the 26th. Their food supply ran short, as the surrounding zamindars had joined the invaders. On the 14th day of the siege, Mr. Johnstone writes, "We have now left about four days provisions at six *chataks* of rice per day, and without any hope of a supply from any of the zamindars or country people,—the enemy's horse, 6000, and about 1000 to 1500 Baksaris possessing the whole

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country round and visiting us daily". That day (5th February, 1761), the Marathas made an attack and captured the outlying houses and walls, but were finally expelled by the British sepoys. In the meantime, at the first notice of the danger, the Calcutta Council had sent a relieving force with two guns. These promptly arrived on the scene (*c.* 7th February) and the Marathas immediately decamped, without fighting, towards Katak. But some of their bands continued to plunder the ryots of Bardwan even in this month, and thus prevented their return to their homes and the resumption of cultivation. (Long, *Selections,* i. Nos. 537, 560, 543, 541; *Calendar P.C.,* 884, 900.) Foiled in the field, Sheo Bhat from Katak continued to write letters to Calcutta claiming the *chauth* of Medinipur, which he declared to be a part of the province of Orissa, and urging the withdrawal of the British troops from that town. The Calcutta Council in their replies informed him that Medinipur had long been separated from Katak, and that " The Nawab has given the *chakla* of Medinipur to the English for their military expenses, and troops have been stationed there to protect the poor and fight the Company's enemies. Sheo Bhat, therefore, must not disturb the English troops there." In April and again in May, the Katak governor threatened invasion if the *chauth* of Bengal was not forwarded to him at once.* The English replied that the Nawab was writing directly to Janoji on the subject. (*Calendar of Persian Correspondence,* i. Nos. 1024, 1082, 1099, 1169, 1109, 1189. Long, *Selections,* i. 552.) A British force under Mr. Bristow also entered the country lying between Medinipur and Katak in

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May 1761, but it did not proceed far. The threat was repeated next year in a letter from Sheo Bhat received on 16th February 1762. (*Calendar* i. 1445.) But the Bengal Government was now negotiating with the Court of Nagpur, and a Maratha envoy Govind Rao Chitnavis arrived at Calcutta early in July to settle the question of *chauth*. Janoji was distressed by not receiving the twelve *lakhs* annually from Bengal, and he wrote strongly urging immediate payment. (*Ibid*, 1561, 1536.)

The English negotiate with Bhonsle.

But at this time the friction between the English Company and Nawab Mir Qasim began to assume a serious form, and it culminated in war in June 1763. The English, therefore, found it necessary to secure the neutrality of Janoji by all means. The Calcutta Council wrote to him, "asking him to consider them as security for the *chauth* of Bengal and not to assist Mir Qasim or to distress Mir Jafar. On account of these letters Janoji refused the bills and money sent by Mir Qasim, nor did he grant him an asylum in the *subah* of Katak, which the ex-Nawab desired." (*C. Pers. Corr.* ii. 77.) Evidently some *chauth* was paid at this time, and then withheld, for Janoji in his letter (received at Calcutta on 17th Feb. 1767) complains that "more than two years have passed without any money being sent to me." This refusal of the English to make a definite settlement of the *chauth* of Bengal and their trick in spinning out for eight

*In a letter to the Company, received in Calcutta on 5th Oct. 1764, Bhavani Pandit, the *diwan* of Orissa, speaks of having received a letter from Janoji stating, "In the time of the former Nawab, the negotiations concerning the *chauth* were never brought to an issue without the approach of an army." (Long, *Selec.* No. 724.)

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years their negotiations for a treaty of friendship with him (as he complained to his envoy Gopalpuri Gosain, whose report was received in Calcutta on 16th Oct. 1767, *Calend.* ii. 1154), exasperated Janoji. But he was weakened by internal dissensions in the Maratha State and too afraid of the all-conquering English army to risk a war in assertion of his treaty rights.

That great thruster Sheo Bhat Sathe was dismissed from his office* of Maratha *subahdar* of Orissa in March 1764 and replaced by Chimnaji as Chief and Bhavani Pandit as *diwan*. Both of them were friendly to the English, and a letter from this *diwan*, received on 27th Dec. 1764, assures the Company that he would not molest the Jalesar or Medinipur *ryots*. (Long, *Selections*, i. 727). In short Janoji was now following a policy of sincere amity towards the English. But Sheo Bhat did not leave the scene with his dismissal. He played a clever trick for regaining his master's favour and his own governorship of Orissa. Early in 1765 he bribed the shadowy Delhi Emperor and procured from him a *farman* appointing Janoji *nazim* of the province of Orissa together with the Medinipur district and some parts of the Bardwan country also. This *farman* he now sent to Janoji, asking for some troops to enable him to occupy these districts. Accordingly, Janoji sent 5000 horse under Azam Khan (? Jah) Bhonsle, Bhavani Pandit, Naroji Jachak and others of his chiefs, and these were expected to reach Katak in July 1765. (Long, *Selec*,. i. 807).

*He had been once temporarily removed in April 1761 (*Cal.* i. 1109.), but shortly afterwards reinstated, as we find him in office in Feb. 1764. (Long, *Selec.* i. 780.)

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English plans for acquiring Orissa from Marathas.

But alas for the vanity of human wishes! Lord Clive reached Calcutta on 3rd May 1765 as Governor and the Marathas wisely drew their tail between their legs. Nothing came of the invasion projected by Sheo Bhat and his own expected reward. At last balked of all his hopes, Sheo Bhat rebelled against his master, in alliance with some zamindars of central Orissa, but was hunted down by the Katak *subahdar's* forces with the co-operation of an English detachment from Medinipur, February, 1767. (*Calend.* ii. 63, 77.) Bhavani Pandit, who had succeeded Chimnaji some time back, was replaced in March 1768 as *subahdar* of Orissa by Ganesh Shambhaji, "a man of great knowledge, perfectly polite in his manners" and amicable to the English. (*Calend.* ii. 892, 1027.) The new Chief of Katak, as in duty bound, began to demand the *chauth* from the English as a treaty obligation. But his efforts met with no more success than those of his rougher predecessors. This needs explanation.

Not only had Orissa been an *annex* to the *subah* of Bengal almost ever since its incorporation in the Mughal Empire under Akbar, but geography and the needs of territorial defence had decreed the union of the two. This need became all the stronger when the English secured possession of Bengal and the Madras Coast (the Northern Circars), with a foreign territory like Orissa severing the natural connection between the two. The military and political danger of this situation was apparent to the English from the very outset. As early as 17th September, 1761, the Select Committee of Calcutta came to this conclusion:—

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"From the southward, Sheo Bhat, the Maratha Chief at Katak, obstinately continues his pretensions to the Medinipur Province, as well as his demands for the *chauth*... If they can find an opportunity they will attempt to send plundering parties into Bengal... The proper step to prevent the Marathas from committing their usual ravages in Bengal will be to carry the war into their own country.

"Agreed therefore that we set on foot an expedition against Katak, and...we learn from the Nawab the rents of the country lying between Jalesar and Katak, and what parts he will be willing to assign to the Company to defray the expenses of such an expedition, which can hardly fail to complete the ancient possessions of the *subahs* of Bengal". (Long, *Selec.* i. 552.) But the Nawab Mir Qasim wisely negatived the project.

Lord Clive's efforts.

Lord Clive during his second Governorship opened negotiations with Janoji for the cession of Orissa to the Company, on condition that the Company paid half the three years' arrears of *chauth* down and the other half as soon as the Marathas would vacate the province, the English at the same time guaranteeing the regular payment of *chauth* (12 *lakhs*) in future. The Court of Directors approved of the idea in their letter of 20th November, 1767, in these words: "We have paid much attention to your negotiations with Janoji for settling the *chauth*, on the terms agreed between the Marathas and Alivardi Khan. We think it both equity and sound policy to pay them their *chauth;* and shall much approve it if

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it can be done on the terms you mention, of their ceding to us their possessions in Orissa, which would join our Bengal possessions to the (Northern) Circars, and would afford us the means of preventing any hostile attempts of any European enemy who might land in that part of Orissa" (*Calend.* ii. 1153; Long *Selec.* i. 925.). But Clive's offer to Janoji was not accepted, and the scheme was dropped, though the English continued to cultivate the friendship of the house of Nagpur, especially under Warren Hastings.

Lord Cornwallis on the acquisition of Orissa.

Lord Cornwallis was so impressed by the value of Orissa to the Company " in its rendering the communication complete between Bengal and our dominions in the Karnatak" that he authorised C. W. Malet, the British envoy at the Maratha Court, to try to obtain this province in exchange for some other British territory with a money compensation for the difference in value between the two. To induce the Marathas to give up the holy city of Jagannath, he authorises Malet to agree to " grant particular privileges or even exemption from all Government duties to Maratha subjects on pilgrimage to Benares, Gaya, and Allahabad, and to Jagannath when surrendered to us." He even offered to furnish Malet " with the means of making very liberal presents in money, to any of the (Maratha) ministers who should give a decisive assistance in forwarding the accomplishment of the object in question". Ultimately Lord Cornwallis realised that it was " absolutely impossible ever to obtain Katak directly from the Bhonsle family by any other means than by force," and his negotiations, like

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Clive's before him, fell through. (Ross, *Cornwallis Corres* i. 366, 411, 453.) That force it was left to Wellesley to apply.

Harm done by Maratha raids.

The peace made by Alivardi with the Marathas and his payment of *chauth* for Bengal, though it did not bring perfect or immediate peace to Bengal and Bihar, achieved one happy result. It changed the character of the Bargi raids. These were no longer organised invasions decreed by their State, supported by all its resources, and led by its recognised chiefs. Henceforth they were mere predatory incursions by bands of unruly soldiers or some local officer eager for gain on their private account, whose act the Maratha Government disavowed but was not strong enough to prevent or punish. And not only were these raids in future fewer, but their range also was limited to the south-western fringe area of Bengal, namely the country west of Medinipur and south of Bardwan, which as late as 1775 was still marked "Impenetrable" in Rennell's survey map. Considerable harm, however, could be done even by such bands of Maratha soldiers gone out of control and acting as marauders. Warren Hastings* makes this clear:—

"It is probable that extreme distress would have compelled them (*i.e.*, the unpaid soldiers of Chimnaji Bhonsle in Orissa) to seek for support by an invasion of our frontiers.... We know that before they could have been totally destroyed, or even expelled, much mischief would have been done in the provinces of Bardwan and Medinipur

*Despatch on the Negotiations of 1781, dated 30 April, 1781, Forrest ii. 259.

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by their depredations, and still more by the alarm which they would have excited amongst the inhabitants. The revenues and investments must have been put to a stop from the desertion of the *ryots* and manufacturers...and the fatal consequences of such an irruption would have been felt throughout these provinces, and particularly in the manufactures, for many succeeding years. We can mention on the best information that the desertion of the manufacturers for only three days from the *arang* of Radhanagar alone would have occasioned a loss of four *lakhs* of Rupees, as the silk worms must have been wholly destroyed, and their loss could not have been recovered for many years."

How the Maratha menace was finally stopped.

In proportion as the strength of the house of Nagpur decayed through internal discord, lack of far-sighted statesmanship, and incapacity in the rulers, the power of the English increased through their successive triumphs in many a distant quarter of India. So great was the prestige of British arms and British statesmanship even in provinces untraversed by a single British soldier, that no Indian power except Tipu Sultan would willingly provoke an encounter with them. We see this frame of mind well illustrated in Janoji Bhonsle's speech to his envoy Gopalpuri Gosain (reported in a letter received at Calcutta on 16 October 1768.) The English, as he complained, in their hour of need when hard pressed by Mir Qasim, had promised to pay him the *chauth* due in terms of the old treaty, but as soon as the danger blew over, they broke their faith and kept him unpaid ever since. Janoji is quivering with indigna-

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tion during this discussion, but nowhere breathes any threat of invasion, as even his servant Sheo Bhat had done in 1761 and 1762; The Maharajah of Nagpur merely appeals to the sacredness of treaty obligations and the sense of honour of the English nation. He is exasperated, he is sarcastic, but he never blusters. *(*Calend.* ii. 1154, also 77.)

Hence, the most potent cause of the final release of these provinces from the long-drawn agony of Maratha incursions was the recognition of British paramountcy, in fact if not in theory, by the Indian potentates, and the first fruit of that paramountcy, namely *Pax Britannica*, which alone has made the birth of a new India possible.

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*Janoji to Lord Clive (recd. 17Feb. 1767):—"Out of respect for the friendship which has subsisted of old between him and the English,...he (Janoji) did not grant Mir Qasim an asylum in the *subah* of Katak. Is greatly surprised that more than two years have passed without any money [*i.e., chauth*] being sent to him. Notwithstanding this, he has made no movement to prejudice the English...Has long searched for a friend brave and true. At last in His Lordship he has found one...Rectitude and good faith are the support of heaven and earth; but in these days few people possess these qualities. The writer in the Deccan has after all his searches found none possessing these qualities except His Lordship." [*Cal.* ii. 77.]

Janoji's speech to his envoy Gopalpuri Gosain on the latter's return from Calcutta with a letter from Lord Clive:—"I am always desirous of friendship and union; but as this treaty has been on foot for eight years, I have sustained great losses: I placed entire confidence in the letters the English sent me during the war with Mir Qasim, assuring me that the sums would be delivered on condition that I would not give that Nawab any assistance...But nothing has appeared since but craft and guile. If this had not been the case,...our names would have been celebrated throughout Hindustan as well as in the Deccan." (Letter recd. in Calcutta, 16 October 1768.) [*Cal.* ii. 1154.]

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ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA.

P. 27, l. 21, *for* himseif *read* himself.

P. 116, l. 20, *transpose the Semi-colon to after* 1753.

P. 117, l. 13, *transfer the bracket to the beginning of the next line.*

P. 119, *transfer the footnote to P. 118.*

P. 52, l. 17, *Add this note to* "Compromise" :—

The text of this agreement, dated August 31, 1743, is given in *Aitihasik Patravyavahar*, 2nd ed., ed. by Sardesai and others. nos. 35 and 36, according to which Raghuji was to enjoy the two subahs of Bengal (including Orissa) and Oudh in their entirety and all Bihar excluding mahals yielding 12 lakhs of revenue. The Peshwa was to enjoy in Bihar only the two estates of Tikari (Sundar Shah's) and Bhojpur inclusive of Daudnagar, *i.e.*, the tract lying west of Patna and east of Allahabad, yielding 12 lakhs a year; but from this tract land (superior and inferior together) yielding 3 lakhs was to be set apart. Neither was to encroach on the other's sphere.

P. 68, l. 21, *Add this note to* "broke off peace negotiations" :—

A news-letter sent to the Peshwa from Nagpur, about April 1746, tells us, "when Alivardi heard of the capture of Durlabhram, he sent a Pathan on behalf of Janakiram to Raghuji, and Raghuji sent Nilopant [to the Nawab.] While this Pathan was in Raghuji's camp, Marathas brought in 200 men as captives, whose noses and ears they cut off; this the Pathan saw in silence.... On being informed of this act of mutilation while terms were being discussed,Alivardi ordered Nilopant to be killed. But the Brahman was released because he had been given a pledge of safety. Thus the peace was ruptured." [*S. P. D.* xxvii. 11].

P. 70, l. 8, Additional information in great detail on this Campaign in North Bihar is given in *S. P. D.* xxvii. 7 and 11.

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